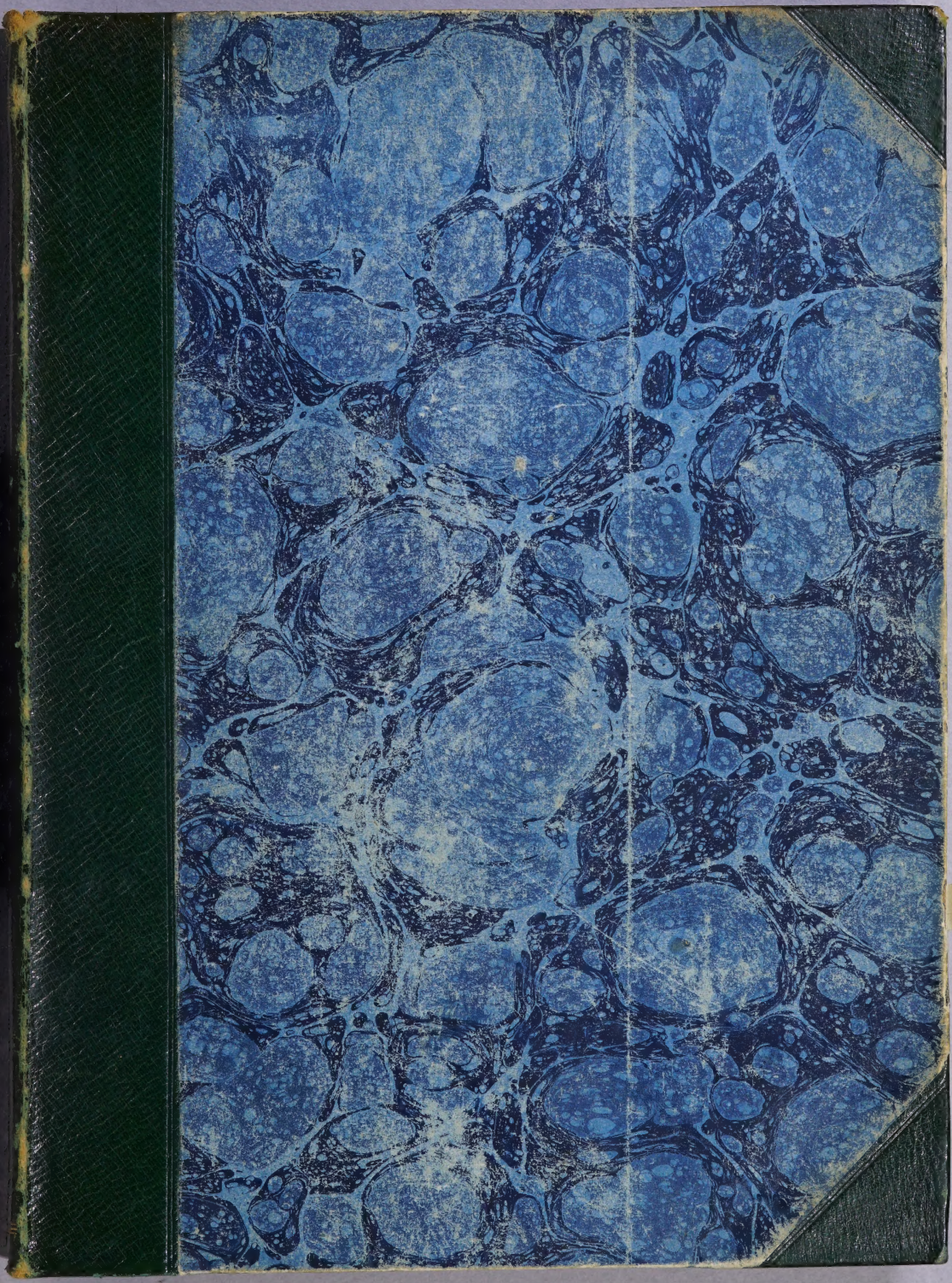
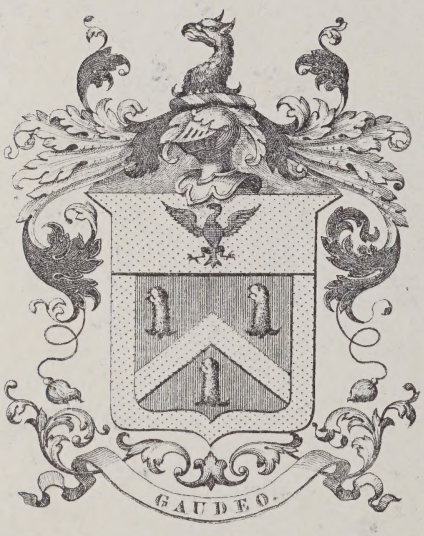
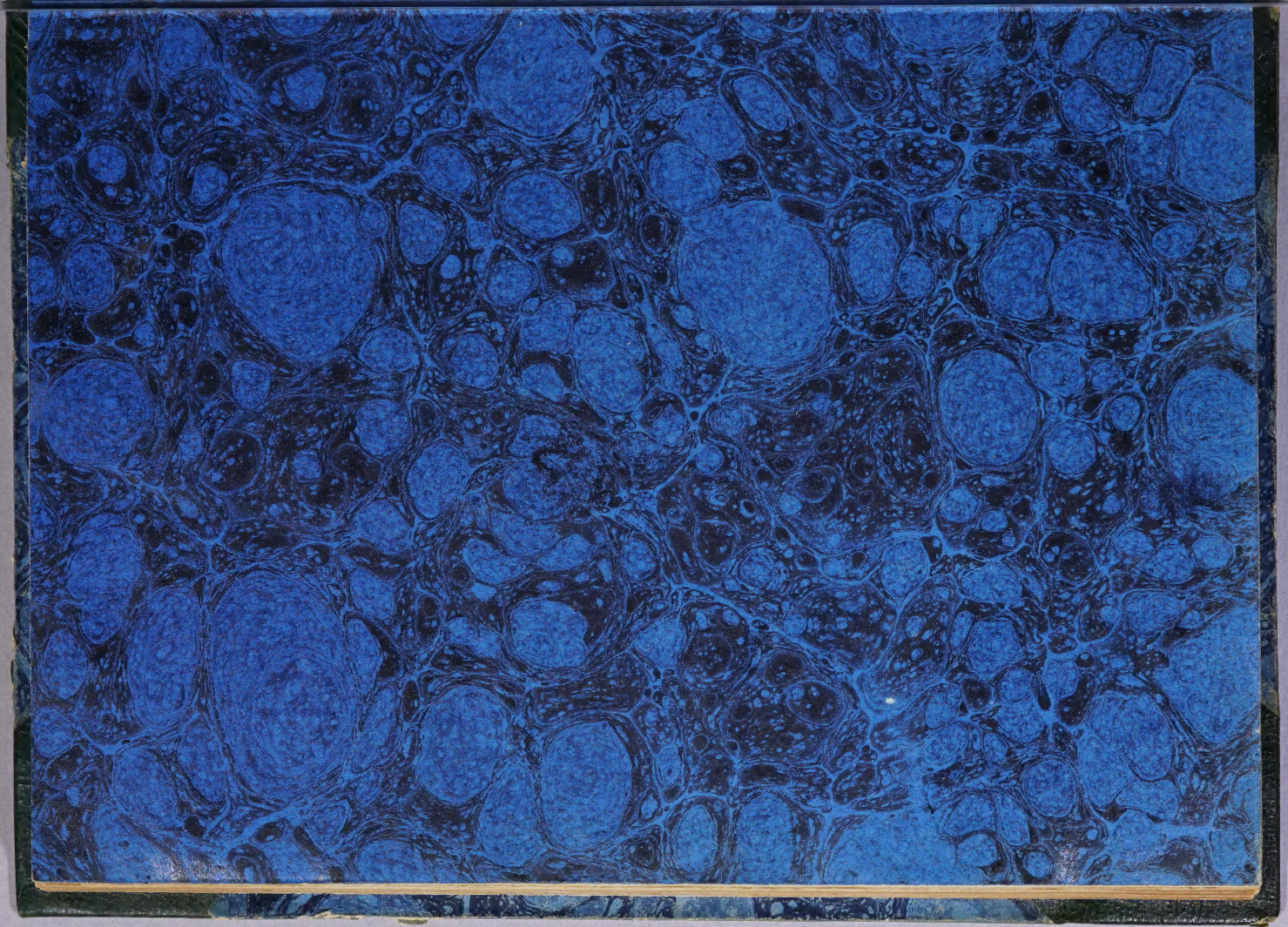
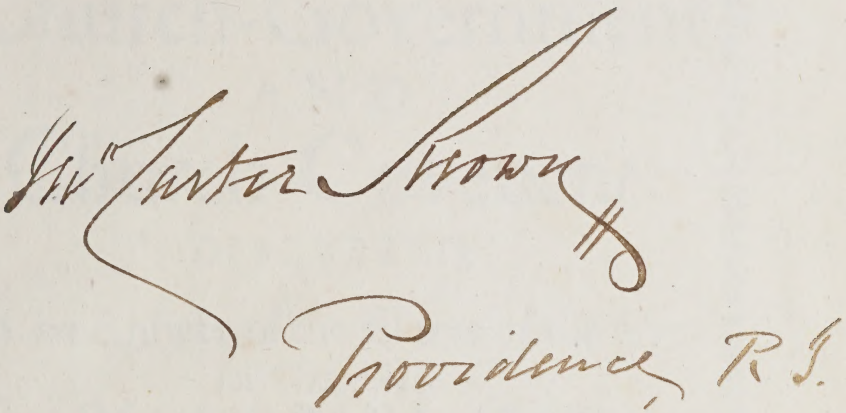




John Carter Brown.





Letters written also
An Apology for the Character &c

with Letter pp. 14
Title agrees agreed with this.
Ramont

Church-Government AND Church-Covenant DISCVSSED,

In an Anſwer of the Elders of the ſeverall Churches in *NEW-ENGLAND* To two and thirty Queſtions, ſent over to them by divers Miniſters in *England*, to declare their judgments therein.

Together with an Apologie of the ſaid Elders in *New-England* for Church-Covenant, ſent over in Anſwer to Maſter *Bernard* in the yeare 1639.

As alſo in an Anſwer to nine Poſitions about Church-Government.

And now publiſhed for the ſatisfaction of all who deſire reſolution in thoſe points.

By Richard Mather

LONDON,
Printed by *R. O.* and *G. D.* for *Benjamin Allen* and are to be ſold at his Shop in *Popes head-Ally*, 1643.

To the READER.

JOHN CARTER BROWN

IT is not hard to believe that such discourses as this wil meet with divers censures, the prophane and ignorant loathing Christ, and any thing concerning him; the Formalist accounting such truths troublesom that may ingage him in the change of his opinions and practises, and some of the wisest will be apt to question the tyming such light as this: yea doubtles this pamphlet-glutted age will so looke upon it, and lay it by.

But because I doe conceive that this sword will not be sheath'd which is now drawn, till Church-work be better known, and more countenanced, and since safety is laid up in the Temple, Psa. 27. 3,4,5. I could not but help on this, which attended and practised may preve our security next to Christ. These were either sudden answers to our doubting and inquiring Brethren, or some satisfaction rendred about our so much slighted Church-Covenant, which wee could not but thinke might come to view, for the present stay to some faithfull soules, that call for light, and intend to use it well: for others, of what kind soever, we must beare their harder thoughts, among those usuall loads of scandals, that men of our judgement must carry, especially if zeale for the Truth draw them forth to publike observation; nor doe we purpose (God helping us) to succumbe under calumny, being the livery of quieter times then these, let us bee viler still, so God and his Arke may be more glorious. Yet this I doe professe for my selfe and Brethren that as we have not bin dealt with, nor convinc'd of any offence, so we shall ever be ready to give an account of that hope which is in us, being call'd thereunto; in the meane time we over looke these barkings of black mouthes, and wish a good Comment be made upon the text of our plaine meaning.

The onely way I know to reach Gods mind in Worship will bee to love the truth for it's owne sake: yea to love it when it shall condemne our practises and persons also: Who hath not observed that the first step to error is the declining the truth in love to it?

Hence

Hence Popery begat her first brat, and hath nurst it up with the same milke; we would earnestly desire that none would call that unseasonable or unreasonable, which God seemes even now to call for, at the calling of this Synode, and will carry so much Reason with it, as God and his truth will owne; more tendernes and respect to our Brethren we know not how to shew, who sent us these 32. Questions; *no other dealing would we have from our brethren not consenting with us. Some Rivers have bin noted to differ in the colours of the water, yet running in the same Channell: let Jesus Christ be lifted up by us all; let us love him whil'st wee dispute about him.*

Presbytery and Independency (as it is cal'd) are the wayes of Worship and Church fellowship now looked at, since (we hope) Episcopacy is coffin out, and will be buried without expectation of another resurrection. We are much charged with what we own not, viz: *Independency, when as we know not any Churches Reformed, more looking at sister Churches for helpe then ours doe, onely we cannot have rule yet discovered from any friend or enemy, that we should be under Canon, or power of any other Church; under their Councell we are. We need not tell the wise whence Tyranny grew in Churches, and how common wealths got their pressure in the like kind.*

These be our sighs and hearty wishes, that selfe may be conquered in this poore Nation, which shuts the doore against these truths. Know (good Reader) we do not hereby go about to whistle thee out of any known good way of God. Commonly Questions and Answers cleare up the way, when other Treatises leave us to darknes. Read them, and what we say for a Church-Covenant, it may save charge and time in reading other Bookes, remember wee strive not here for masteryes, but give an account of our practise, wherein if thou know'st we faile Candidus imperti; *if we agree let us worke by our plat-forme; and may thy soule flourish as a greene heath or watered garden. So prayeth*

Thine heartily

H. PETER.

Hugh Peters.

THE XXXII QUESTIONS STATED.

1. WHether the greateſt part of the Engliſh there (*by eſtimation*) be not as yet unadmitted to any Congregation among you, and the Reaſons thereof?

2. *what things doe you hold to be Eſſentiall and abſolutely neceſſary to the being of a true Viſible Church of Chriſt?*

3. *Whether doe you not hold all Viſible Believers to bee within the Viſible Church as Members thereof, and not without in the Apoſtles ſence,* 1 Cor. 5. *and therefore ought ſo to be acknowledged, and accepted in all Congregations whereſoever they ſhall come, and are ſo knowne: and ought (if they deſire, and be not otherwiſe unfit) of right to be permitted to partake in all Gods ordinances and Church priviledges there, ſo farre as they perſonally concerne themſelves, although they be not as yet fixed Members in particular Covenant, either with that Congregation where for the preſent they reſide, nor with any other?*

4. *Whether you doe not hold that* Baptiſme *rightly (for ſub-*

ſubſtance) partaked doth make them that are ſo Baptized, Members of the Viſible Church: and ſo to have right (at leaſt quoad nos*) to all the priviledges thereof (ſo farre as they are otherwiſe fit) untill they be caſt out (if they ſo deſerve) by Excommunication.*

5. *Whether doe you not admit Children under age as Members of the Church, together with, and in the Admiſſion of their Parent or Parents: So as thenceforth they may partake of all Church priviledges (being otherwiſe fit) without any other perſonall profeſſion of Faith, or entring into Church Covenant, when they ſhall come to yeares? and how long doe you count them under age?*

6. *Whether do not you admit Orphants under age, with and in their Guardians?*

7. *Whether doe you admit or refuſe Children under age only according to the preſent eſtate of their neareſt Parents? Or doe you not admit them if any of their next Anceſtors before their parents were believers?*

8. *Whether doe you require of all perſons of age, whom you admit Members of any Church?*

1. *A publike vocall declaration of the manner and foundneſſe of their converſion?*

2. *A publike profeſſion of their faith concerning the Articles of Religion.*

3. *An expreſſe verball covenanting to walke with the ſaid Church in particular, in Church fellowſhip.*

4. *And not to depart from the ſaid Church afterward without the conſent thereof: or how doe you hold and practiſe in theſe things?*

9. *Whether doe you hold all, or the moſt of our* Pariſh *aſſemblies in* Old-England *to be true Viſible Churches of Chriſt; with which you may lawfully joyne in every part of Gods true worſhip (if occaſion ſerved thereto:) or if not all or the moſt, then*

then what ones are those of which you so account, and with which you durst so partake or joyne; and in what respects? And why be not the rest such as well as they?

10. *If you hold that any of our parishionall Assemblies are true Visible Churches, and that the Members thereof are all, or some of them (at least) members of true visible Churches, then whether will you permit such members (at least) as are either famously knowne to your selves to be godly, or doe bring sufficient Testimoniall thereof from others that are so knowne, or from the Congregation it selfe whereof they were members here, to partake with you in all the same Ordinances, and parts of Gods true worship in any of your Congregations (as by occasion they may be there) in the same manner, and with the like liberty, as you would permit any that might happily come unto you from any of the Churches of* Geneva, France, *the* Low-Countreyes, *or yet from any one Church to another among your selves: Suppose from some Church about* Connecticut, *or that of* Plimouth, *&c. Vnto the Church at* Boston, New-Towne, Dorchester, *&c. Or if not, what may be the Reason thereof?*

11. *Whether doe you hold our present standing in our Parish Assemblies here in* Old ENGLAND, *to bee lawfull and safe to be continued in, or how farre it may be so?*

12. *Whether doe you hold that every Believer is alwayes bound to joyne himselfe as a fixed Member to some one particular Congregation, so as if he doe not, and so oft and so long as he doth it not, so oft and so long he is without the Church in the Apostles sence,* 1 Cor. 5. *as an Heathen or Publican, out of the Kingdome of Christ, and possibility of salvation, according to that maxime in divinity,* Extra Ecclesiam non est salus.

13. *VVhether doe you thinke it lawfull and convenient that a company of private and illiterate persons (into a Church body combined) should themselves ordinarily examine, elect,*

ordaine, and depose their owne Ministers of the word, without the assistance of any other Ministers of other Churches, where the same may be had?

14. Whether doe you hold that every small Company of seaven, or nine, or twenty, or fourty persons, combined into a Church body, be such a Church (as by the ordinance of Christ) hath, and ought to have all power, and exercise of Church Government: So as they may transact all Ecclesiasticall businesses independently amongst themselves?

15. Whether do you give the exercise of all Church power of Government to the whole Church, or to the Presbiters thereof alone? and if to those, then we desire to know what act of Government, and Superior authority (properly so called) may the Presbiters doe, more then any other member may doe, or without the particular consent of the rest, wee crave to have those particular Acts mentioned: and how, and over whom in those Acts the Presbiters doe rule (in propriety of speaking) more then the rest of the Congregation doe?

16. Whether doe you not permit Women to Vote in Church matters?

17. Whether in Voting doe the Major part alwayes, or at any time, carry Ecclesiasticall matters with you, or in what things doth it, in what not?

18. What meanes have you to preserve your Churches in Vnity and Verity, or to correct or reduce any Church erring in Doctrine or practice. As,

1. Whether you have any plat-form of Doctrine and Discipline agreed upon; or if you have not, whether meane you to have one, and when; and thinke you it lawfull and expedient so to have?

2. Whether have you combined your selves together into Classes, or purpose so to doe, so as to doe no weighty matter without their counsell and consent?

3. Or

3. *Or give you any power to Synods and Councells to determine and order things that cannot otherwise be ended, so as that their determination shall bind the particular Churches so assembled to due obedience, in case they decree nothing but according to Truth and right, and to peaceable suffering, in case they should doe otherwise? Or what other course you have, or intend to have for that end aforesaid?*

19. *Whether hold you, that each particular Church may lawfully make such Laws or Orders Ecclesiasticall, for the Government of it selfe, and the Members thereof; for decency, order, and Edification, as shall oblige all her Members, and may not be omitted without sinne?*

20. *Wherein hold you that the whole Essence of a Ministers calling doth consist: As 1. whether is Election by the People it, yea or no? Or 2. is it so Essentiall, as that without it, the Ministers calling is a meere nullity? Or 3. is Ordination as Essentiall a part thereof, as the Peoples Election? Or 4. is it but a meer formality and solemnity of their calling?*

21. *Whether doe you hold it lawfull for meer lay or private men to ordaine Ministers in any case?*

22. *What Essentiall difference put you between the Office of Pastor and Teacher, and doe you observe the same difference inviolably; and do not your Teachers by vertue of that Office give themselves usually to application of doctrine as, well as your Pastours? and do they not also usually apply the Seales?*

23. *What authority or Eminency have your Preaching Elders, above your sole Ruling Elders, or are they both equalls?*

24. *Whether may a Minister of one congregation (being thereto requested) do as a Minister any act of his Ministery (as Preach, Baptize, Administer the Lords Supper, Ordain, &c. in and unto other Congregations besides his owne?*

25. *Whether hold you that a Minister of a Congregation,*

leaving or loosing his place (suppose without his fault, doe withall loose both Nomen *and* Esse *of his ministery, and do become a meere Lay, or private man, untill he be a new elected, and ordained?*

26. *Whether doe you allow, or thinke it lawfull to allow and settle any certain & stinted maintenance upon your Ministers?*

27. *Whether doe you permit and call upon meer Lay and private men (neither being in the ministerie nor intended to it) ordinarily to preach or Prophecie publiquely, in, and before the Congregation? and whether thinke you that prophecying mentioned,* 1 Cor. 14. *be to be understood of such, and be an ordinary and standing order of God in the Church?*

28. *Whether doe you allow and call upon your people publiquely before all the Congregation to propound Questions, move doubts, & argue with their ministers of matters delivered either by them or others, either at the same, or some other time?*

29. *Whether hold you that the conversion of sinners to God is ordinarily the proper fruit and effect of the word Preached, by a* Minister *alone, and that by vertue of his Office alone, or that it is alike common to ministers, and Lay persons, so they be gifted to preach?*

30. *Whether all and every of your Churches (including* Plimouth, &c.) *do precisely observe the same course both in Constitution and Government of themselves?*

31. *Whether would you permit any Companie of* Ministers *and People (being otherwise in some measure approvable) to sit downe by you, and set up and practise another forme of Discipline, enioying like libertie with your selves in the Commonwealth, and accepted as a sister Church by the rest of your Churches?*

32. *Whether hold you it lawfull to use any set forms of Prayer in publique or private, as the Lords prayer and others, either made by himselfe that useth the same, or else by some other man?*

THE

THE ANSWERS TO THE Aforegoing QUESTIONS.

The first Question Answered.

ALL the Engliſh and others alſo are freely admitted to be preſent in our Congregations, at the reading of the Scriptures, and expoſition thereof (which is wont alwayes to goe along therewith) at the preaching of the word, ſinging of Pſalmes, Prayers, Admitting of Members, and diſpencing of Cenſures; And many alſo are admitted to Church Communion, and ſo to partake in Church Ordinances and priviledges, as Sacraments, power of Election, Cenſures, *&c.* though many alſo there are who are not yet admitted to this Church Communion. But whether is the greater number, thoſe that are admitted hereunto, or thoſe that are not we cannot certainly tell? But in the Churches in the Bay, where moſt of us are beſt acquainted, we may truely ſay, that for the heads of Families, thoſe that are admitted are farre more in number then the other: beſides whom there are likewiſe ſundry children

dren and Servants that are Admitted also. And for the Reasons why many are not yet received to Church Communion, they are sundry. 1. Many are not admitted because they are not yet knowne. Every yeare hitherto God hath repleniſhed the Country with many new commers, and these at the first are not suddainly taken in, as Members of Churches, till by time there have been some triall of them, and better occasion to know them what they are. Sometimes once a yeare there are in the Land many hundreds, and some thousands of this sort. 2. When by time they come to be knowne, many do appeare to be carnall, and give no Testimony of being Members of Christ, and therefore if they should offer themselves to be Members of Churches the Churches would not see Warrant to receive them, because the Church is the body of Christ. 3. Some that are Godly do of their own accord for a time forbeare to offer themselves, till they be better acquainted with the Church and Ministry where they intend to joyne, and with the wayes in which the Churches walke in this Country, and and till they be better informed what are the duties of Church Members. 4. Those that are knowne to be Godly, are all admitted in some Church or other presently, upon their own desire, when they offer themselves thereto: except any have given offence by walking (in any particular in their Conversation) otherwise then becomes the Gospell; and then such are to give satisfaction to them to whom they have given offence, by acknowledgeing their offence, and shewing repentance for it, and then they are Admitted.

To. 2. It is one thing what Churches ought to be by the appointment of Jesus Christ, another, what weakneſse and swervings from his appointment, he may beare withall for a time, before he renounce and cast off a People from being his Church. In respect of the former our Answer is, That when a Visible Church is to be erected, planted or constituted, by the Appointment of Christ, it is necessary that the matter of it, in regard of quality, should be Saints by calling,

calling, Visible Christians and Believers, 1 *Cor.* 1.2. *Eph.* 1.1. And in respect of Quantity no more in number in the dayes of the New Testament, but so many as may meet in one Congregation. 1 *Cor.* 11.20 & 14.23. *Acts* 14.27. & 15.22 30. And the forme, a gathering together of these visible Christians, a combining and uniting of them into one body, by the bond of an holy Covenant, for which we refer you to the Apolgie of the Churches in *N. E.* sent the last yeare in way of Answer to Mr. *Bernard.* For the latter we deny not, but visible Churches rightly constituted at the first, may degenerate, and great corruptions may grow therein, both in respect of matter and forme, and likewise in respect of their walking and Administrations, and yet the Lord in his patience may beare long with them, before he give them a Bill of Divorce, and make them *Lo-ammi*, not a People; as the example of the Church of Israel in the old Testament. Of the Church of *Corinth*, the Churches of *Galatia*, the 7 Churches of *Asia*, and others in the New Testament, doe abundantly manifest. But what degrees of corruption may be, before the soule as it were, and life, and being of a Church be destroyed, is hard for us precisely and punctually to determine; or to say thus farre a Church may erre, and yet remaine a Church; but if it proceed any further, then it ceaseth to be a Church any more; onely in the generall this we observe, the Lord doth not presently cast off a Church or give them a Bill of Divorce, no not for fundamentall errors in Doctrine, or Idolatry in Worship, or Tyranny in Government, till after obstinate and rebellious rejection of Reformation, and the meanes thereof: for all these were found in the Church of *Israel* when they crucified Christ, yet the Apostles rejected them not, till after the light of *Paul* offered, and blasphemously rejected, *Acts* 13.45, 46. But if your selves have so Studied this point, as to have ripened and formed thoughts therein, we should gladly receive light from you.

We do not know any visible Church of the *N. T.* pro- *To*: 3.

perly so called, but onely a particular Congregation; and therefore when this Question in the first and last clause of it speakes of Believers within the visible Church, as Members thereof, although they be not Members of that particular Congregation, where for the present they reside, nor of any other: this speech seemes to us according to our apprehension to imply a contradiction. They that are within the visible Church as Members thereof, must needs be Members of some particular Congregation, because all visible Churches are Congregationall, as Mr. *Baine* sheweth at large from the Church of *Antioch*, *Act.* 14. 27. the Church at *Corinth*, 1 *Cor.* 11. & 14. and other examples and Reasons with Answers to the objections to the contrary in his *Diocef. Triall Quest.* 1. Whereto we referre you in this Point; neither is he alone in this Tenent, for Mr. *Parker*, and many other teach the same. Those silenced and deprived Ministers that wrote the Booke called, *The Christian and modest offer of Disputation*, laying downe 16. Propositions which they offer to maintaine against the Prelats, give this for the fourth of them *viz.* *There is no true visible Church of Christ, but a particular ordinary Congregation onely.*

Doubtlesse every true visible Church hath power from Christ to exercise Excommunication and other Ordinances of Christ, so that they proceed therein according to the Rules of the word, 1 *Cor.* 5. 4. 5. *Mat.* 18. 17. Now Dr. *Whitakers* sheweth against *Bellarmine*, that Excommunication belongs not to the universall Church, but onely to a particular Congregation. *Qui justè excommunicantur*, saith he, *eo, satanæ traditos esse concedimus, non tamen posse propriem, Dici ejectos ex Ecclesia Catholica, Quia Excommunicatio non Catholica, sed particularis Ecclesiæ censura est.* De Eccles. Qu. 1. c. 6. Wherefore if Excommunication which belongs to the visible Church, belongeth to a particular Congregation, it followeth that there is no visible Church, but onely a particular Congregation. Secondly, As all visible Believers are not without Christ, but in Christ, according as they are believers, so we easily grant, that those without, of whom the Apostle

Apostle speakes, 1 *Cor.*5.were unbelievers, Pagans, and Heathens, both without Christ, and also without the visible Church. For those that were in Christ, and believers in Him,were not wont to abstaine from joyning to some particular Congregation or other; and so it come to passe, that as they were in Christ by their Faith, so by such joyning they became also to be within the visible Church. 3. But this we conceive is cleare also, that unlesse Believers, be Members of this or that particular Congregation,to whose inspection and Government they have commended themselves in the Lord, they also in some respect may be said to be without, that is without the jurisdiction and power of the visible Church, and without right to the priviledges of it, as long as they continue in that State: for the Church hath nothing to do, either to dispence censures and Church priviledges to Pagans, who are without all Churches, and without *Christ* also; or to such Christians,who though they are not without *Christ*, yet are not within any particular Church: for neither the Church, nor the Ministers thereof may be ἀλλοτριοεπίσκοποι. And though those without of whom the Apostle speakes, 1 *Cor.* 5. were Pagans and Heathens, both without *Christ*, and without the visible Church also, yet when hee speaketh of Judgeing, and saith they might judge them that are within, and not judge them that are without, hee must not be understood as if he meant it simply of being in Christ or without Christ, and no more then so, but also of being in that particular Congregation, and without it:for it is plaine, that those that were in *Christ*, if they were not also within their particular Congregation, they had nothing to do to judge them; and those that were within their particular Congregation, them they might judge, though they were not in *Christ*. 4. And that Church priviledges do not belong to Believers, as such, but onely to such as withall are Members of some particular Church: the Grounds and Reasons in the Answer to the third and fourth Proposition sent the last yeare, do seeme to us to make manifest, whereto we do referre you, for further Answer to this Question.

To: 4. It is an opinion of the Anabaptists, that the Church is made by Baptisme, and therefore when they constitute or erect a Church, they do it by being all of them Baptized, which was the manner of Mr. *Smith*, Mr. *Helwis*, and the rest of that company when they set up their Church: The Papists also do imagine, that men enter into the Church by Baptisme, and it is said, that their Founts were set neere the doores of their Temples, to signifie mens entring into the Church by Baptisme, and they thought themselves to be christened, or made christian soules by being Baptized. But we do not believe that Baptisme doth make men Members of the Church, nor that it is to be Administred to them that are without the Church, as the way and meanes to bring them in, but to them that are within the Church, as a seale to confirme the Covenant of God unto them. For

1. This is one point of the dignity and priviledge of the Church, that Baptisme and all Church Ordinances are given and committed to it, as Circumcision, and Church Ordinances were given and concredited to the Church of the Jewes, *Ioh.* 7. 22. Now if Baptisme in its first being and institution be given as a benefit and priviledge to the Church, then Baptisme is not that which makes the Church; but the Church is presuppосed, and must be before it, for the dones, or persons to whom a thing is given, must needs be before the gift that is given to them.

2. The nature and use of Baptisme is to be a seale to confirme the Covenant of Grace between God and his Church, and the Members thereof, as circumcision also was, *Rom.* 4. 11. Now a seale is not to make a thing that was not, but to confirme something that was before; and so Baptisme is not that which gives being to the Church, nor to the Covenant, but is for confirmation thereof. To bring in Baptisme before the Covenant, and before the Church, with whom God makes the Covenant and then to bring in the Church afterwards, is to make Baptisme a seale unto a Blanke, or to a falshood. When the Jesuits of *Rhemes* had said that *Christ* sent

ſent 12 Apoſtles to the Jewes to move them to penance, and ſo by Baptiſme to make them of his Church. And that *Paul* was ſent to the Gentiles to move them alſo to faith and penance, and by Baptiſme to make them of his Church. This ſaying of making men of the Church by Baptiſme, though uttered by them, as it were by the way, and not being the chiefe ſcope of their diſcourſe, yet ſeemed to Mr. *Cartwright* ſo erroneous and unſound, that hee would not let it paſſe without bearing ſpeciall witneſſe againſt the ſame. And therefore in oppoſition thereunto he hath theſe words, and in another Character for more conſpicuouſneſſe, *viz.* That Baptiſme makes not men of the Church, but ſealeth their incorporation into it, hath been declared afore. *Argument* of *Acts* 6. 1. And that Catechiſme which is commonly ſaid to be penned by our Reverend Brother Mr. *Ball*, or Mr. *Nicholas*, now with God, giving this for the definition of Baptiſme, that it is a Sacrament of our ingrafting into Chriſt, communion with him, and entrance into the Church, doth in the Expoſition plainely declare, that when they called Baptiſme a Sacrament of our entrance into the Church, they did not meane that Baptiſme made men Members of the Church, but ſignified and ſealed that they were Members afore: The ſeed of Abraham ſay they, *Pag* 144. *Gal.* 3. 7. or children of Chriſtian Parents are within the Covenant, are Chriſtians and Members of the Church, 1 *Cor.* 7. 14. *Rom.* 11. 16. Baptiſme therefore doth not make them Chriſtian ſoules, but doth ſolemnly ſignifie and Seale their ingrafting into Chriſt, and that communion which the Members of *Chriſt* have with him their head, and doth confirme, that they are acknowledged Members of the Church, and entred into it, 1 *Pet.* 3. 21.

3. The Lord hath had his Church when there was neither Baptiſme nor circumciſion, and therefore Baptiſme or circumciſion cannot be that which conſtitutes the Church. The Church is one and the ſame in eſſence from the begining of the world to the end thereof, *viz.* A company of People combined together by holy Covenant with God,

and one with another, and this hath been before Baptisme, and likewise before Circumcision in the dayes of the Patriarks afore *Abraham*. Yea if Baptisme now, or Circumcision in former time did make men Members of the Church, then for 40 yeares together there was no making Members of the Church, then for 40. yeares together there was no making Members of the Church; for so long circumcision was discontinued, when Baptisme was not yet instituted, *Ioss.* 5. 2, 3. *&c.* And so by this meanes all that Generation of the Israelites that were not circumcised till their comming over *Jordan* unto *Gilgall*, should have bin no Members of the Church afore that time of their circumcision, which is contrary to the Scripture; which as it gives the name and title of a Church to the body of this people, when they were in the Wilderneſſe, *Act.* 7. 38. (and they were in the Wilderneſſe 40. yeares, in the latter parts of which time there were few left remaining that had beene circumcised) so it witnesseth that afore this time of their circumcision they were in covenant with God and his Church, *Deut.* 29. 10, 11, 12. For that covenant was not made with their Fathers that came out of Egypt, and were circumcised there, because that generation was consumed in the Wilderneſſe for their murmuring afore this time: but this covenant was made with the children, that as yet were uncircumcised, and therefore it was not circumcision that made men Members of the Church.

4. Baptisme hath been Administred, and no Church nor Members made thereby, and men have been made Members of Churches and not then Baptised, but before. And therfore it is not Baptisme that makes men Members of the Church, Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the Region round about Jordan were Baptised of *Iohn* confessing their sinnes, *Mat.* 3. 6. And Christ made and Baptised more Disciples then *Iohn*, *Ioh.* 4. 1. And yet neither Christ nor John did make new Churches nor gather men into them themselves, both the one and the other living and dying Members of the Jewish Church, which was not yet dissolved, untill upon

on their rejecting of Christ (not onely of his person upon the crosse, but of his Gospel in blaspheming and persecuting Grace offered them) the two staves of beauty and bands were broken and cut asunder, whereby God did breake the Covenant that he had made with that People, and the Brotherhood between Juda and Israel, that is, he did un-church them, *Zach.* 11. 10, 11. *&c.* to 15. So that here is Baptisme Administred by John and Christ, and yet men not received thereby into the Church as Members, for they were Members long afore.

Againe, when any of those of Jerusalem, Judea, and the Region round about Jordan, that were Baptised of John, or any of those, many more that were Baptised of Christ, were afterward joyned as Members to those christian Churches in Judea, Samaria, and Galile, *Act.* 9. 31. (As no doubt many of them were) they were not made Members of those Christian Churches by being Baptised, for they were Baptised long afore by John and Christ, so that those men were Members of the Jewish Church, which was not yet dissolved, and were Baptised afterward. And therefore it was not Baptisme that made them members, either of the one Church or of the other.

5. There are sundry inconveniences which for ought we see will unavoidably follow, if we shall say that Baptisme makes men members of the Church; For first, if Baptisme be that which constituts the Church, then Baptisme may be dispenced by them that are no Ministers, for extraordinary Ministers, as Apostles, and such like are now ceased, and ordinary Ministers have no power to dispence Baptisme to any, but onely to them that are already members of the Church, seeing their Commission and power is limited to the Church, and the flock of God over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers, *Acts* 20. 28. Besides, the Church is before the Ministers, seeing the power of choosing Ministers is given by Christ unto the Church, and therfore if Baptisme be that which makes the Church, then men must be Baptised afore there be Ministers to Baptise them

Secondly, if Baptiſme rightly for ſubſtance partaked, doth make men members of the viſible Church, then it will follow that Papiſts are members of the Church: for they have Baptiſme ſo farre right for ſubſtance, as that it needs not be repeated. But Mr. *Perkins* teacheth that this Baptiſme proves not the Church of *Rome*, of which all Papiſts are members, to be any true Church of God, and gives ſundry Reaſons for the ſame, in Anſwer to them, that from Baptiſme rightly for ſubſtance Adminiſtred in Popiſh Aſſemblies, would prove thoſe Aſſemblies to be true Churches: *Expoſit. of Creede*, in the Article, *I believe the holy Catholique Church.*

And ſurely for our parts, we doe not ſee how it will be avoyded, but if Baptiſme made men members of the viſible Church, either Papiſts are members of the viſible Church, and the Church of *Rome*, of which they are Members, a true viſible Church, or elſe we muſt renounce their Baptiſme as corrupt and falſe even for the ſubſtance of it; and ſo all ſuch as ſhall be converted from amongſt them, muſt be Baptiſed againe, as not having had the ſubſtance of Baptiſme before: ſuch dangerous conſequences do follow from ſaying, that Baptiſme, rightly for ſubſtance partaked, doth make them that are ſo Baptiſed Members of the viſible Church.

Object. If any ſhall ſay, *Though Baptiſme do not make men Members of the Church, yet it proves them to be Members as a cauſe, is proved by the effect, or an Antecedent by a conſequent: and therefore all Baptiſed Perſons ſhould be admitted to all Church priviledges as Members, where ever they become.*

Anſw. We Anſwer, that this will not hold neither, but ſuppoſe a man have received Baptiſme as a Member of ſome viſible Church, which ought not to have been Adminiſtred to him, had he not been a member, yet this doth not prove him to be a member ſtill and ſo give him right to all Church Priviledges, though hee do remaine alwaies as a Baptiſed perſon; and the Reaſon is, becauſe his Baptiſme may remain, when his Church fellowſhip may be diſſolved, as that he can have no right to Sacraments thereby: the Church

Church member-ship of a Baptised Person may be thus dissolved by sundry meanes. 1. By some sentence of Excommunication justly passed against him for his sinne; for that censure puts him away from the Communion of the Church, 1 *Cor.* 5. 2. 13. and makes him as an Heathen or Publican, *Mat.* 18. 17. So that in that case he can have no right to Sacraments by his Member-ship, though he still continue a Baptised Person. 2. By his voluntary departing from the Church and the communion of the same when it is unjustly done, 1 *Ioh.* 2. 19. *Iude* 19. *Heb.* 10. 25. In which case Dr. *Ames* resolves such Schismaticks to be no Members of the visible Church, *Cas. Cons. Lib.* 5. *c.* 12 *Q.* 4. *Resp.* 3. 3. By the dissolution of the Church of which he was a Member; for Church Member-ship is in relation to a Church, and therefore if the Church cease, the Member-ship must cease also; *Relatum & correlatum Quâ talia sunt simul, adeoque se mutuo ponunt et tollunt.* Now a Church may be dissolved, 1. By Apostacie and Gods giving them a bill of Divorce thereupon, *Ier.* 3. 8. When yet there may be in such a Church some particular person or persons deare to God, who in such a case are bid to come out from such an Apostate Church, *Rev.* 18. 4. *Hose.* 2. 1, 2. & 4, 15, 17. 2. By death, as by some grievous Pestilence or Massacre, *&c.* in which case one particular person surviving, cannot be counted a Member of a Church, when that Church is extinct of which he was, and yet he remaines a person Baptised if he were Baptised afore. 3. If that be true which is taught by Dr. *Ames Cas. Cons. Lib.* 5. *c.* 12. *Q.* 3. *Resp.* 2. that in some cases it is lawfull and necessary to withdraw from the communion of a true Church (which seemes to be agreeable to grounds of Scripture, *Ephes.* 5. 11. 2 *Chro.* 11. 14.) then that will be another case wherein Church Member-ship is disanulled; for how a man can be counted in that state a Member of a Church, when hee hath lawfully and necessarily withdrawn himselfe from the communion of the Church, we do not understand. And this shall suffice for Answer unto this Point, whether Baptisme make men

Members of a viſible Church, which as we conceive, is the ſcope and drift of this Queſtion. Yet before we proceed to make Anſwer to the next, ſomething alſo may be ſaid concerning ſome paſſages in your Amplification of this fourth Queſtion. As firſt concerning thoſe words wherein you aske, *Whether they that are Baptiſed have not right, quoad nos, to all the priviledges of the viſible Church* (ſo farre as they are otherwiſe fit:) concerning which words we may ſay, 1. That thoſe words of your Parentheſis *(ſo farre as they are otherwiſe fit:)* doe plainely imply, that in your judgement, though one hath received Baptiſme, yet this doth not give him right to the priviledges of the viſible Church, unleſſe other things do concurre to make him fit, wherein we conſent with you. Now if this be ſo, then this ſeemes to be an Anſwer to that which (as we conceive) is the maine intent of the Queſtion. For how can it be, that Baptiſme alone ſhould give men right to the priviledges of the Church (as Members thereof, as the Queſtion ſeemes to import) when in the Amplification of it, it is granted, that Perſons Baptiſed have no ſuch right, except other things doe concurre to make them fit: we doe not ſee how theſe things doe ſtand together.

Secondly, thoſe words *as farre as they are otherwiſe fit:)* as they ſeeme to imply that which contradicts the maine ſcope of the Queſtion; ſo they are ſo generall and of ſuch a latitude, as that when the Queſtion is Anſwered, the Reader is ſtill left at uncertainty: For if ſuch a Parentheſis may be annexed *(ſo farre as men are otherwiſe fit:)* then the like Queſtion may be applied to many other things beſides Baptiſme, and would receive the very ſame Anſwer, as in caſe of Baptiſme it would receive. As for example, if one ſhould aske whether Morall honeſtie or litterall knowledge in the Scriptures, or Hiſtoricall Faith, or the uſe of Reaſon, whether any of theſe doe not give men right to Church priviledges, ſo farre as they are otherwiſe fit? You know the Anſwer would be, Yea. For though none of theſe be ſufficient alone, to give men right to the priviledges of the Church,

Church, yet they are ſuch as they that have them, have right ſo farre as they are otherwiſe fit, and ſo if it were granted that they that have received Baptiſme have right, as you ſay, to all the priviledges of the Church, ſo farre as they are otherwiſe fit: yet as this doth not prove that Baptiſme alone doth give men ſuch a right, ſo ſtill it remaines to be conſidered, and more particularly declared, what thoſe other things are that beſides Baptiſme muſt concurre to make one fit; and unleſſe thoſe things be expreſſed in particular, the Queſtion with ſuch a generall Qualification as is here ſet down, may be Anſwered affirmatively, and yet the Reader will be ſtill in the darke, and as much to ſeeke as before.

Laſtly, thoſe words in the latter end of this Queſtion had need to be further cleared, wherein you aske, *Whether Baptiſed perſons have not right to all the priviledges of the Church, quoad nos, untill they be caſt out by Excommunication?* For ſuppoſe an open Blaſphemer, a Sabath-breaker, an Adulterer, a Drunkard, *&c.* that deſerves to be Excommunicated, be not proceeded againſt according to rule, but be ſuffered to continue in the Church through bribery or other corruption of the times, would you ſay that ſuch a perſon had right either before God, or *quoad nos* to all the priviledges of the Church, onely becauſe hee is Baptiſed? Surely your words doe import ſo much, unleſſe that Parentheſis *(ſo far as they are otherwiſe fit)* may be any helpe in this caſe. And yet we hope you doubt not but ſuch Doggs and Swine have no right either *quoad nos*, or otherwiſe, to the priviledges of the Church as long as they continue in that State, although they have received Baptiſme, and although through the ſinfull neglect of men they be not caſt out by Excommunication, as they doe deſerve; For if groſſe ſinners have ſuch right to Church priviledges, onely becauſe they are Baptiſed, then by what right can the Church caſt them out by Excommunication, as you ſeeme to confeſſe that ſhe may: for can ſhe caſt men out from ſuch priviledges whereunto they have right? doubtleſſe ſuch proceedings were not

right, unleſſe the Church have ſuch a Tranſcendent power as the Apoſtles never had, for they could do nothing againſt the truth but for the truth, nor had they any power for deſtruction, but for Edification, 2 *Cor.* 13. 8. 10. Wherefore we dare not ſay ſuch men have right to Church priviledges (*quoad nos*) untill they be actually caſt out, becauſe before they be caſt out, it muſt be cleare to the Church, that they have no ſuch right, or elſe ſhe can have no lawfull Right to caſt them out.

To 5. *&* 6. 1. Infants with us are Admitted Members in and with their Parents, ſo as to be Admitted to all Church priviledges of which Infants are capable, as namely to Baptiſme; and therefore when Parents are once Admitted, their Children are thereupon Baptiſed, if they were not Baptiſed afore, as ſometimes it falls out. 2. But whether they ſhould thereupon be admitted to all other priviledges when they come to age, without any perſonall profeſsion of Faith, or entring into Church Covenant, is another Queſtion, of which by Reaſon of the Infancy of theſe Churches, we have had no occaſion yet to determine what to judge or practiſe one way or other. 3. But for the preſent this we would ſay; It ſeemes by thoſe words of your Parentheſis (*being otherwiſe fit*) you do acknowledge, that Children of Church Members are not to be admitted to Church priviledges, unleſſe they be fit, wherein we conſent with you as counting it altogether unſafe, that Idiots, Franticks, or perſons openly ungracious and prophane, ſhould be admitted to the Lords Table, though they were the Children of Church Members, and thence we may inferre the neceſſity of their perſonall profeſsion of their faith, when they come to yeares, and taking hold of Church-Covenant, whereby we meane onely a Renewing of Covenant, or a new profeſsing of their Intereſt in Gods Covenant, and walking according to it, when they ſhall be *Adulti*: for otherwiſe we do confeſſe, Children that are borne when their Parents are Church Members, are in Covenant with God even from their birth,

birth, *Gen.*17. 7. 12. and their Baptiſme did ſeale it to them. But notwithſtanding their Birthright, we conceive there is a neceſsity of their perſonall profeſsion of Faith, and taking hold of Church-Covenant when they come to yeares (though you ſeeme to thinke it not needfull:) for without this it cannot ſo well be diſcerned; what fitneſſe is in them for the Lords Table and other Church priviledges, as by this meanes it might? And inaſmuch as entring into Church-Covenant is nothing elſe but a ſolemne promiſe to the Lord, before him and the Church, to walke in all ſuch wayes as the Goſpel requireth of Church Members, if they ſhall refuſe to make any ſuch promiſe, and ſhall be unable, or unwilling to make any profeſsion of their Faith, when it is required of them, this would be an evidence againſt them, of their unfitneſſe for Church priviledges, inaſmuch as they openly breake that Rule, 1 *Pet.* 3. 15. Be ready to give a Reaſon of the hope that is in you with meekneſſe and feare. What hope is there that they will examine themſelves when they eat of that Bread and drinke of that Cup, 1 *Cor.* 11. 28. Who when others do examine them they are unable or unwilling to give Anſwer? Or how ſhall we thinke that they will receive the Lords Supper worthily, or walke as becomes the Goſpel if they do refuſe to profeſſe or promiſe any ſuch matter? Wherefore in this Point we cannot but fully approve the practiſe of the Reformed Churches, among whom it is the manner as *Zepporus* writeth, to admit Children that were Baptiſed in their Infancy unto the Lords Table, by publique profeſsion of their Faith, and entring into Covenant, *conſuetum eſt*, ſaith he *ut qui per ætatem, neque Doctrina Catechetica perfectum ad ſacram Cœnam primum admittantur, fidei confeſſionem coram tota Eccleſiâ publicè edant*, &c. *Polit. Eccleſ. l.* 1. *c.* 14. *p.* 158. that is, The manner is, that they who by reaſon of age and perficiency in the Doctrine of Catechiſme are firſt Admitted to the Lords Supper, ſhould publiquely before the whole Church, make confeſsion of their Faith, being brought forth into the ſight of the Church by their Parents, or them that are inſtead of Parents, at the

appointment of the Minister: and likewise should promise and Covenant by the Grace of God to continue in that faith which they have confessed, and to leade their lives according to it: yea and moreover, to subject themselves freely and willingly to the Discipline of the Church; these words we see are full and plaine, that Children are not in those Churches received to the Lords Table without personall confession of Faith, and entring into Covenant before.

4. But how long Children should be counted under age, and whether Orphans are not to be admitted with their Guardians (which is your sixt Quæry) we should be willing to heare your judgement therein, as having of our selves hitherto had no occasion to search into those Questions; onely this we thinke, that one certaine rule cannot be given for all, whereby to determine how long they are under age, but according as God gives experience and maturity of naturall understanding, and Spirituall; which he gives sooner to some then unto others.

To 7. Such Children whose Father and Mother were neither of them Believers, and sanctified, are counted by the Apostle (as it seemes to us) not fæderally holy, but uncleane, what ever their other Ancestors have been, 1 *Cor.* 7. 14. And therefore we Baptise them not. If you can give us a sufficient Answer, to take us off from that Scripture, 1 *Cor.* 7. which seemes to limit this fæderall sanctity or holynesse to the Children whose next Parents one or both were Believers, we should gladly hearken to you therein; but for the present, as we believe we speake, and practise according to our light. And if we should goe one degree beyond the next Parents, we see not but we may goe two, and if two, why not 3. 4. 20. 100. or 1000? For where will you stop? And if we shall admit all Children to Baptisme, whose Ancestors within a thousand Generations have been Believers, as some would have us, we might by this Reason Baptise the Children of *Turkes*, and of all the *Indians*, and *Barbarians* in the Country; for there is none of them but they have had

had some Believing Ancestors within lesse then a 1000. Generations, it being farre from so much since *Noah* and his Sonnes came forth out of the Arke.

We do believe that all Members of Churches ought to be Saints, and faithfull in Christ Jesus, *Eph.* 1. 1. 1 *Cor.* 1. 2. *Col.* 1. 2. *Phil.* 1. 1. and thereupon we count it our duty to use all lawfull and convenient meanes, whereby God may helpe us to discerne, whether those that offer themselves for Church Members, be persons so qualified or no: and therefore first we heare them speake concerning the Gift and Grace of Justifying Faith in their soules, and the manner of Gods dealing with them in working it in their hearts: which seemes to be your first particular in this Quæry. Secondly, we heare them speake what they do believe concerning the Doctrine of Faith, so taking a tryall what measure they have of the good knowledge of the Lord as knowing that without knowledge men cannot well Examine themselves and discerne the Lords body, as Church Members ought to doe when they come to the Lords Table. And hereby also we would prevent (as the Lord shall helpe us) the creeping in of any into the Church that may be infected with corrupt opinions of Arminianisme Familisme, *&c.* or any other dangerous error against that faith which was once delivered to the Saints, as knowing how easily such men if they were admitted, might infect others, and perhaps destroy the Faith of some. And this seemes to be intended in your second particular. For both these we have our warrant as in Generall, from those places which shew how Church Members ought to be qualified, that they ought to be Saints, faithfull in Christ Jesus, *&c.* So in speciall from that, *Matth.* 3. 6. *Acts* 19 18. & *Acts* 8. 37. 38. Where men before they were admitted, made profession of Repentance towards God, and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ; for it is expressely said, that they confessed their sinnes, they confessed and shewed their deeds, they professed their faith in Jesus Christ the Sonne of *To* 8.

of God. Thirdly, when this is done, thoſe that by manifeſtation of Repentance and Faith are approved; as fit Members for a Church do openly profeſſe their ſubjection to the Goſpel of Chriſt, and to all the Ordinances of God in that Church, where now they joyne as Members, which ſeemes to be your third particular in this Quærie. The Diſtinction of particular Churches one from another, as ſeverall and diſtinct Societies, ſeemes to us a neceſſary ground for this practiſe; for without this kinde of Covenanting, we know not how it would be avoyded, but all Churches would be confounded into one, inaſmuch as it is neither Faith, nor intire affection, nor Towne-dwelling, nor frequenting the Aſſemblies that can make a man a Member, or diſtinguiſh Church Members from other men: See the Apologie.

4. Your fourth particular in this Quærie is Anſwered in the Anſwer to the ſixt Poſition ſent the laſt yeare: Beſides all theſe, we heare the teſtimony of others, if there be any that can ſpeake of the converſion and Godly converſation of ſuch perſons: which we judge to be a warrantable courſe from *Acts* 9. 26, 27.

To 9. It is the ſecond of your Quæries, what things we hold neceſſary to the Being of a true viſible Church in Generall: which being Anſwered; this of the Pariſh Aſſemblies in *England* in particular, whether we hold all or the moſt of them to be Churches, we conceive might well have been ſpared. They that now the ſtate of thoſe Aſſemblies may make application of the Generall to the particulars, if they have a calling therunto. Yet becauſe you are pleaſed to put us to this alſo, we thus Anſwer. 1. That we doubt not but of Ancient time there have been many true Churches in *England* conſiſting of right matter, and compacted and united together by the right forme of an holy Covenant. For Mr. *Fox* ſheweth at large, that the Goſpel was brought into *England* in the Apoſtles times, or within a little while after, *Acts & Mon. lib.* 2. begining *p.* 137. Where hee reporteth out of *Gildas*, that *England* received the Goſpel in the time of

of *Tiberius* the Emperor, under whom Christ suffered; and that *Joseph* of *Arimathea* was sent of *Philip* the Apostle from *France* to *England*, about the yeare of Christ 63. and remained in *England* all his time, and so hee with his fellowes laid the first foundation of Christian Faith among the Brittaine people; and other Preachers and Teachers comming afterwards, confirmed the same and increased it. Also the said Mr. *Fox* reporteth out of *Tertullian*, that the Gospel was dispersed abroad by the sound of the Apostles into many Nations, and amongst the rest into Brittaine, yea into the wildest places of Brittaine, which the Romans could never attaine unto, and alledgeth also out of *Nicephorus*, that *Simon Zelotes* did spread the Gospell to the West Ocean, and brought the same into the Iles of *Brittanie*, and sundry other proofs he there hath for the same Point. Now if the Gospel and Christian Religion were brought into *England* in the Apostles times, and by their meanes, it is like there were Churches planted there of Saints by calling (which is the right matter of Churches) and by way of holy Covenant, as the right form: for that was the manner of Constituting Churches in the Apostles times, as also in the times afore Christ, as hath been shewed from the Scripture in the Apologie. And the footsteps hereof (though mixed with manifold corruptions that have growne in aftertimes) are remaining in many places of the Land to this day, as appeareth by those 3 Questions and Answers at Baptisme. *Abrenuntias? Abrenuntio; Credis? Credo: Spondes? Spondeo: Dost thou renounce the Devill and all his works? I renounce them all. dost thou believe in God the Father, &c? I do believe. Dost thou promise to walk according to this Faith &c? I do promise.* For though it may be they conceived, that men entred into the Church by Baptisme, yet hereby it appears that their judgment was that, when men entred into the *Church* there ought to be a renouncing of sin, and believing on *Christ*, and an open professing of these things, with a promise to walk accordingly.

Secondly, Though Popish Apostacy did afterwards for many ages over-spread all the Churches in *England* (as in other Countries) yet we believe God still reserved a remnant according to the Election of Grace amongst them, for

whoſe ſake he reſerved the Holy Scriptures amongſt them, and Baptiſme in the name of the Trinity onely. And when God of his rich Grace was pleaſed to ſtirre up the Spirit of King *Edward* the ſixth, and Queene *Elizabeth* to caſt off the Pope, and all fundamentall errors in Doctrine and Worſhip, and a great part of the Tyranny of Popiſh Church Government, though at firſt ſome Shires and ſundry Pariſhes ſtood out againſt that Reformation for a time, yet afterwards they generally received the Articles of Religion agreed upon *Anno* 1562. which are publiſhed and conſented to by all the Miniſters endowed in every Congregation, with the ſilent conſent alſo of the people, and ſubſcription of the hands of the chiefe of them; wherein they do acknowledge no rule of Faith or manners, but the holy Scriptures; no divine Worſhip but to God onely; no mediation nor ſalvation but in Chriſt onely: no converſion by mans free will, but by Gods free Grace: no Juſtification but by Faith: no perfection nor merit of works, with ſundry other neceſſary and ſaving truths; all which containing the Marrow and Summe of the Oracles of God (wich are the λόγια, the *eloquia Dei*, concredited onely to the Church. *Rom.* 3. 1. 2. and which are that ſaving Doctrine of truth, which is fruitfull in all the world where it comes, *Colo.* 1. 5, 6. and upon which the Church is grounded and built, and which alſo it holdeth forth and maintaineth, 1 *Tim.* 3. 15.) we do therefore acknowledge, that where the people do with common and mutuall conſent gather into ſetled Congregations ordinarily every Lords day, as in *England* they do, to heare and teach this Doctrine, and do profeſſe their ſubjection therunto, and do binde themſelves and their Children (as in Baptiſme they do) to continue therein, that ſuch Congregations are true Churches, notwithſtanding ſundry defects and dangerous corruptions found in them, wherein we follow the judgement of *Calvin Inſtit.* 4. 1. 9. 10. *&c. Whitaker, de notis Eccleſiæ cap.* 17. and many other Divines of chiefe note: nor can we judge or ſpeake harſhly of the Wombes that bare us, nor of the paps which gave us ſuck.

Thirdly, But inaſmuch as grievous corruptions of latter yeares have greatly increaſed in ſome of thoſe Aſſemblies (as

(as we heare) both in Doctrine, in Worship, and in the Go-ˢ vernment thereof, besides those that were when some of uˢ were there, and in former Yeares: Therefore we are not withᵉ out feare (and with griefe we speake it) what things may com unto at length. If Corruptions should still increase and grow, they might come in time (if the Lord be not more m erciful) unto such an height as unto obstinacy in evill, and to wilfull rejection of Reformation, and the meanes thereof; and then you know it might be just with God to cast off such utterly, out of the account and number of his Churches; so as never to walke among them any more: which we heartily pray the Father of mercies to prevent that such a day may never be: But if *Ephesus* repent not of her declinings, the Lord hath threatned that *he will come unto her quickly, and remove her Candlestick*; that is, he will un-Church them, *Rev.* 2. 4, 5. and *Lukewarme Laodicea shall be spewed out of his Mouth*, *Rev.* 3. 16. And therefore it behoves such of them to Repent, and Reform themselves betime, lest the Lord deale with them as he hath done with others.

And it much concernes your selves (in hearty love and faithfullnesse we speake it, and so we desire you would accept of it) it very much concernes you (deare Brethren) whil'st you live amongst them, to beare faithfull witnesse against the corruptions that are remaining in any of them, in respect of their Constitution, Worship, Discipline and Ministerie, lest by any sinnefull silence or slacknesse of yours that should blow the Trumpet and stand in the gap, the breach should be made wider, and the iniquity increase; and lest men should flatter themselves in their sinnes, under the Name and Title of the true Church, as the Jewes thought themselves secure because of the Temple of the Lord, *Jer.* 7. 4.

4. Because you would know not onelie whether we count those Assemblies to be Churches, but what wee would doe for joining in Gods Worship in them, if occasion served thereunto: We Answer, that if we were in *England*, we should willingly joine in some parts of Gods true Worship, and namely in hearing the Word, where it is truely Preached in sundry Assemblies there; Yea though we doe not know them to bee Churches, or knew not what they were, whether true Churches or no? For some Worship, as Praier, and Preaching, and Hea-

ring the Word, is not peculiar to Church Assemblies, but may be performed in other meetings. *Mars-hill* at *Athens* was no Church, nor the Prison at *Philippi*, and yet the Word of GOD was Preached and heard lawfully with good successe in these places, *Act.* 17. and *Act.* 16. How much more might it bee lawfull to heare the word in many Parish assemblies in *England*, in which generally there is a professing of Christ; and in many of them: Many Soules that are sincere and upright hearted Christians, as any are this day upon the face of the Earth; and many Congregations indeed that are the true Churches of Jesus Christ, *See* Mr. *Robinsons* Treatise of the lawfullnesse of hearing the Ministers in the Church of ENGLAND.

5. But why we durst not partake in their prescript Lyturgie, and such Ordinances though true, as are administred therein; We gave you account the last Yeare, in Answer to the first and second Position: As also in an Answer to a Discourse of that Subject, Penned by our Reverend Brother Mr. *Ball*. What we have done in our ignorance whilst we lived amongst you, wee have seene cause rather to bewaile it in our selves here, then to it in others there.

To 10. Our Answer to this Question is this, 1. That we never yet knew any to come from *England* in such a manner as you do here describe (if the things you mention may be taken *conjunctim*, and not severally) *viz:* to be Men famously known to be godly, and to bring sufficient Testimoniall thereof from others that are so knowne, and from the Congregation it selfe, whereof they were Members: We say we never yet knew any to come to us from thence in such a manner, but one or other of the things here mentioned are wanting: and generally this is wanting in all of them, that they bring no Testimoniall from the Congregation it selfe: And therefore no marvell if they have not beene admitted (further then before hath been expressed in Answer to Quest. 1.) to Church Ordinances with us, before they have joyned to one or other of our Churches; for though some that come over bee famously knowne to our selves to be Godly, or bring sufficient Testimoniall with them from private Christians, yet neither is our knowledge of them, nor Testimonial from private Christians sufficient to give us Church-power over them, which wee had

had need to have, if we must dispence the Ordinances of Church communion to them? though it be sufficient to procure all due Reverent respect, and hearty love to them in the Lord.

2. If the things mentioned were all to be found, yet it would be also requisite (if they would partake of Church Ordinances with us, and yet not joyne to any of our Churches) that wee should know the Congregation it selfe, from which they come, not onely to be a true Church, but also what manner of one it is: For such persons cannot communicate with us in Church Ordinances in their owne right; becaus they joine not as Members in any of our Churches; but it must be in right of the Congregation in *England*, to which they doe belong, and by virtue of the communion of Churches, and so our admitting of them to communion with us in such a manner, and upon such terms, is not only an Act of Communion with the persons themselves, but also with the Congregation of which they are: Now as we cannot of Faith admit men to Church Ordinances, which we believe belong only to Church Members; unles we know the Congregation of which they are Members to be a true Church. So somtimes a Congregation may be so corrupt, that though it doe remain a true Church, yet for the corruption and impurities of it, it may be lawfull and necessary to withdraw communion from the same (for which Dr. *Ames* gives sundry grounds and Reasons, *Cas. Cons. lib. c.* 12. *Q.* 3. *Resp.* 2.) or at least to protest against some grosse corruptions therein. In regard whereof we had need to have some knowledge and information what that Congregation is, with whom now we have Church communion; when in their right wee admit men into communion, that wee may know how to admit such Men, and what to require from them more or lesse. And this together with that want of testimoniall from the congregation is one maine Reason, why some few godly men that have come from *England* upon occasion, not with purpose of continuance here, but of returning againe; have not beene received to Church Ordinances during their abode in the Countrey (though this we may say also, that we know not of any such that have requested to be received) whereas such as have come in like manner from one Church to another amongst our selves, upon their request have been received: the Reason we say is, becaus these Churches are better

knowne then the Parish Assemblies are.

3. But if men come from one Church in this Countrey to another with purpose there to stay, and not to returne to the Church from whence they came, (which is the manner of all, or the most that come from *England*) they are not received into our Churches; but upon the very same tearmes, and in the same manner, as men are received that come from *England*; viz: upon personall profession of their faith, and entring into Church Covenant, in that Church to which they now come (And the same we say of such as come from any of the Churches in other Countries) and wherefore are they not received otherwise, because we renounce the Church of which they were Members as no true Church? Not so, but because wee believe in matter of Faith, (such as is the admitting of Members) any true Church may erre: and there may now bee seene some unworthinesse in the man which did not appeare when hee was admitted in the other Church: and therefore no reason that the Act of one Church in the admitting of Members or the like, should bee a binding Rule unto another; for all Churches are left to their liberty to admit and receive such into their Church; as they shal find to be fit according to the Rule of the word, and to refuse others, without respect of what they have bin before, whether Members of this Church, or that Church, or of any Church, or none: and therefore in this, our walking and practice, is alike towards one another, and towards others as it is towards yours. In which practise we are not alone, for the very same as Mr. *Parker* reporteth, is the manner of the Reformed Churches, amongst whom, no man is admitted for a Member; but upon personall profession of faith, and entring into Church covenant, though it may be he have formally beene admitted in the very same manner in the Church where he lived before, *Polit. Eccles. l.* 3. *c.* 16. 3, 4. *p.* 171.

To 11.

If the ground of this Qu. were any doubt in your owne consciences concerning your owne way, there were no fault in propounding such a Qu. for further light and satisfaction, if wee were able to give it. Or if it did arise from any unnecessary intermedling of ours in your matters, so as to take on us to condemne or judge your present standing, when we have no calling

ling thereunto, there were then Reason why we should give account of our owne doings or sayings. But if it came from some men we should looke at it as a tempting Question, tending onely to make matter, and pick quarrells; and then we should leave it to them that framed it, to consider the ground of it; and to frame their owne Answer to it. As for us, we have alwayes been slow and loth to judge or condemne your present standing; remembring the saying of the Apostle, *Who art thou that judgest another Mans Servant, he standeth or falleth to his own Master, Rom.* 14. 4. But now knowing you well (Reverend and Deare Brethren) and your integrity, we thinke wee may lawfully and safely Answer, and that wee would doe by premising a few distinctions, for explaining the Termes of the Question.

1. Concerning the persons in the Parish Assemblies, which may be meant of such as the providence of *God* hath so disposed that they are free and at liberty: or of such as are bound, and it may be not *sui juris*, as Wives, Children under the government of Parents, Servants, Apprentices, Prisoners, Sickefolkes, *&c.*

2. Concerning the Parish Assemblies, which may bee meant either of such as want the Preaching of the Word or Sacraments, or Discipline, or any other holy Ordinance of Christ, or have many Ordinances in them which are not of God, but of Men: or else it may be meant of some others, which in both respects are Reformed and pure, if there be any such.

3. Concerning standing in them, which may be meant onely of habitation, and dwelling upon House or Land within the Precincts of the Parish; or else in conforming in judgement or practise to the corrupt Ecclesiasticall Ordinances used in those Assemblies; and contenting themselves therewith.

4. Concerning lawfull and safe; where safety may be meant either of safety from sinne, or from danger by persecution, these Distinctions wee judge necessary to bee premised, because your Question is, whether wee count your standing in the Parish Assemblies lawfull and safe; or how farre it may be so? And so our Answer is in 3. Propositions.

1. Some Persons, and namely those that are not *sui juris*, may lawfully and without sinne; though it may bee not safely without danger of persecution, continue such standing in the Parish Assemb-

Assemblies, as doe dwell within the Precincts of them, so long as they neither conforme themselves to the corruptions of men by such continuing of their standing, nor live in the neglect or want of any Ordinance of CHRIST through their owne default.

2. Such standing in the Parish Assemblies, where a man shall, and must conforme to the corruptions of men, in Doctrine or Worship; or the Government of the Church, is not lawfull for any to be continued in.

3. To continue such standing in the Parish Assemblies, as to live in the want of any Ordinance of Christ is not lawfull, nor can be done safely without sinne of them, to whom the providence of God doth open a doore of further enlargement.

The first of these Propositions wee suppose you doubt not of.

The second is confirmed by many places of Scripture; and namely by such as these. *Though Israel play the Harlot, yet let not Iudah offend, and come not yee to Gilgall, nor go up to* Bethaven, *nor sweare the Lord liveth: Ephraim is joyned to Idolls, let him alone*, Hos. 4. 15. 17. *Come out from among them, and be ye separate saith the Lord, and touch no uncleane thing, and I will receive you*, 2 Cor. 6. 17. *Be not partaker of other Mens sinnes, keep thy selfe pure*, 1 Tim. 5. 22. *Come out of her my People, that yee bee not partakers of her sinnes, and that yee receive not of her Plagues*, Rev. 18. 4. *Have no fellowship with the unfruitfull works of darkenesse, but reprove them rather*, Eph. 5. 11. *Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment; because he willingly walked after the Commandement*, Hos. 5. 11. *Wee ought to obey God rather then Men*, Act. 4. 19. and 5. 29. *Jeroboam* made Priests of the lowest of the People, which were not of the sonnes of Levi, and ordained a Feast in the fifteenth day of the Eighth Moneth, in the Month which he had devised of his owne heart, &c. and then the *Levites* left their Suburbs and their possessions, and came to *Iudah* and *Ierusalem*, for *Ieroboam*, and his Sonnes had cast them off from executing the Priests Office unto the Lord; and after them out of all the Tribes of Israell, such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel, came to *Ierusalem* to Sacrifice to the *Lord God* of their Fathers, 1 *King*. 12. 31. 32. 33. with 2 *Chron*. 11. 14. 16. Vpon these and such like grounds of holy Scripture

ture we are perſwaded that ſuch ſtanding in the Pariſh Aſſemblies, as this ſecond Propoſition mentions, is not lawfull for any to be continued in. And we hope, you doubt not of the truth of this ſecond Propoſition neither, though we are afraid that many Chriſtians, when it comes to practice, doe ſinfully pollute themſelves by partaking in the Ceremonies, and other corruptions in the prayers, in the Doctrine, and in the Miniſtery remaining in ſundry of thoſe Aſſemblies, whom it will bee your part whilſt you live among them faithfully and by all good meanes to inſtruct and teach, and exhort, to ſave themſelves from the corruptions and pollutions of the times and places wherin they live; as well in this particular of Church matters, and Gods Worſhip as in other things: Wherein wee wiſh with all our hearts that our ſelves when time was, had been more watchfull and faithfull to God and the ſoules of his People, then the beſt of us were: The Lord lay not our Ignorance to our charge.

The third Propoſition may bee made good ſundry wayes, 1. By precepts, wherin we are commanded to obſerve all things whatſoever Chriſt hath commanded, *Mat.* 28. 20. to ſeeke the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſſe, *Mat.* 6. 33. to yeild our ſelves unto the Lord, and to enter into his Sanctuary, 2 *Chr.* 30. 8. And therefore we may not pleaſe our ſelves to live in the neglect of any Ordinance which he hath inſtituted and appointed. 2. By examples, for the Spouſe of Chriſt will not reſt ſeeking her beloved untill ſhee finde him in the fulleſt manner, *Cant.* 1. 7, 8. and 3. 1, 2. *&c.* and the ſame minde was in *David*; as appeares by his heavy Lamentation, when he wanted the full fruition of Gods Ordinances, and his longings, and prayer to be reſtored thereto, *Pſal.* 63. and *Pſal.* 42. and 84. although he enjoyed *Abiathar* the High Prieſt, and the Ephod with him; and likewiſe *Gad* the Prophet, 1 *Sam.* 22. 6, 9, 10. &c. 1 *Sam.* 22. 5. when good *Ezra* in his journey from *Babilon* to *Ieruſalem*, viewing the People at the River *Ahava* found none of the Sonnes of Levi there, afore he would goe any further, he ſent unto *Iddo* the place Caſiphia for Miniſters for the Houſe of God, *Ezra* 8. 15. 16. &c. And when being come to *Ieruſalem* they found by the law, that it was an Ordinance of God to dwell in Boothes, and keepe the Feaſt of Tabernacles in the ſe-

venth Month, they preſently ſet upon the practice thereof, in the appointed ſeaſon; when the like had not beene done in Iſrael, from the dayes of *Ioſhua* the ſon of *Nun* unto that day, *Neh.* 8. 14. &c. Yea, and our Lord Jeſus himſelfe, though hee had no need of Sacraments, to be to him any ſeale of Remiſſion or forgiveneſſe of ſinnes, yet in conſcience to the Ordinance of GOD, (that he might fulfill all righteouſneſſe, *Mat.* 3. 15.) and for our example, did both obſerve the Paſſover, and likewiſe was Baptized, and did eat with his Diſciples at his laſt Supper. All which examples being written for our learning, doe ſhew us how farre wee ſhould bee from contenting our ſelves to live in the Voluntary want of any Ordinance and appointment of GOD.

3. There is none of the Ordinances of Chriſt, but they are needfull and very profitable in the right uſe of them to the ſoules of his Servants: And therefore they ſhould not be neglected. To thinke of any of them, as things that may well bee ſpared; and therefore to content our ſelves to be without them, is to call in queſtion the wiſdome of him that did appoint them, and to make our ſelves wiſer then God.

4. Our owne infirmities and Spirituall wants are ſuch, as that wee have continuall need of all the holy meanes which the Lord hath appointed, for ſupplying what is wanting in us; for correcting what is amiſſe; and for our continuance and growth in grace. Hee is a proud man, and knowes not his own heart in any meaſure, who thinkes he may well be without any ſpirituall Inſtitution and Ordinance of Jeſus Chriſt. Upon theſe and ſuch like grounds, we hold it not lawfull nor ſafe, for any Chriſtian that is free, to continue ſuch ſtanding in the Pariſh Aſſemblies where he cannot enjoy all the ſpirituall and holy Ordinances of Chriſt. And hereupon we do exhort you lovingly in the Lord, to take heed that this be not the ſinne of any of you, nor of any other, whom your example may embolden thereunto: For neceſſity is laid upon you, and upon all Chriſtians, by theſe and ſuch like grounds of the holy word of the Lord; That neither you, nor others doe live in the voluntary want of any holy Ordinance of Chriſt Jeſus, but either ſet them up, and obſerve them in the places where you are; or elſe (if you bee free) to remove for the enjoyment of them, to ſome place where they

may

may be had; and it may be of the two, rather this latter. For sometimes it Israel Sacrifice to their God in the Land, they shall Sacrifice the abomination of the *Egyptians* to the Lord: And lo say they, *shall wee sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us?* It is better therefore in such a case to goe into the Wilderneſſe, and to do it there, *Exo.* 8.25. 26,27. *Hoſ.* 2. 14. *Mat.* 10. 23.

Obj: *As for that opinion that may be in the minds of some, that if any Ordinance of God be wanting, it is the sinne of them that are in Authority, and they must answer for it? But the people of God may without sinne, live in the want of such Ordinances as Superiors provide not for them.*

Answ: The Answer hereuntois, that indeed the Ordinances of God may more peaceably and quietly bee obſerved where the Commandement and countenaunce of Magiſtrates is afforded; for then is fulfilled the saying that is written, *Kings shall bee thy nurſing Fathers, and Queens thy nurſing Mothers,* Esa.49.23. and doubtleſſe it is a great bleſſing, when God (that hath the hearts of Kings and Princes in his hands, *Prov.* 21. 1.) doth incline them to favour, and further the ſervice of the Houſe of GOD, as sometimes he doth, even when themſelves are Alients and Strangers. *Cyrus, Darius*, and *Artaxerxes*, gave great countenance and incouragement to the Jewes to build the Houſe of God, *that they might offer ſacrifices of ſweet ſavour to the God of Heaven, and pray for the life of the King and of his Sonnes, Ezra* 6. 8 9,10. In which caſe good *Ezra* bleſſeth the Lord, that had put ſuch a thing into the Kings heart, to beautifie the Houſe of the God of Heaven, *Ezra* 7. 27. And therefore *Kings and all in Authority, ſhould be prayed for, that we may lead a godly and peaceable life, in Godlineſſe and honeſty,* 1 Tim. 2. 1,2. Nevertheleſſe, the things that are ordained and commanded of GOD, the obſerving of them in a peaceable way (yeilding due reverence to all that are in Authority, and praying for them) this obſerving of the Ordinances of God cannot be unlawfull, for lack of the Commandement of Man, as appeares by the doctrine and practice of the Apoſtles, *Act.* 4. 19. & 5. 29. and the approved practiſe of Believers in their times, if they had neglected the Ordinances of God and namely Church Ordinances, till they had had the commandement of Magiſtrates therein, ſuch neglect would have

beene their grievous ſinne, and for ought we know they might have lived and died without them, the Magiſtrates at that time being all either Heathens or Jewes, yet enemies; and if Church Communion and the exerciſe of ſuch Ordinances, as Chriſt hath appointed for his Churches, was lawfull, and needfull, and profitable, when Magiſtrates were enemies to the Goſpell; and bee not ſo when Magiſtrates doe profeſſe the Goſpell, we doe not ſee but Chriſtians may ſometimes be loſers by having Chriſtian Magiſtrates, and in worſe condition, then if they had none but profeſſed Enemies. Beſides this, if Superiors ſhould neglect to provide bodily ſuſtenance for them that are under their charge; we doe not thinke that any Mans Conſcience would be ſo ſcrupulous, but hee would thinke it lawfull by all good meanes to provide for himſelfin ſuch caſe, rather then to ſit ſtill and ſay, if I periſh for hunger, it is the ſinne of them that have Authority over mee, and they muſt anſwer for it: Neither can we tell how the Conſcience of any Chriſtian can excuſe himſelf, if he thinks not the Ordinances of Chriſt, as neceſſary for the good of his ſoule, as food is neceſſary for his temporall life; or doe not willingly in this ſpirituall hunger break through ſtone Walls as the Proverbe is, and runne from Sea to Sea to ſeeke God in his owne way, rather then to periſh without ſpirituall food, becauſe others provide not for him.

And this is our Anſwer to this eleventh Quere, concerning your ſtanding in the Pariſh Aſſemblies: which Anſwer of ours, and the exhortation therein, as we pray the Father of mercies to make effectuall by his bleſſing for thoſe good ends, which wee intend therein, ſo wee cannot in the ſame, but reflect upon our ſelves and our owne wayes in times paſt; as ſeeing not a little cauſe to judge our ſelves before the Lord, as long as wee live, for our ſinfull ignorance and negligence, when wee were in *England*, to obſerve and walke according to thoſe Rules of the Word, which now upon occaſion given by this Qu. wee doe commend to your ſelves and other Chriſtians. The Lord in mercy pardon our offences, and direct your ſelves and his ſervants in our deare Native Countrey, both in remaining and removing, to doe that which is pleaſing in his ſight.

To 12. Whereas this Qu. in the firſt clauſe and laſt but one compared together

together speakes of Believers out of the Kingdome of GOD, and possibility of salvation, we conceive it is a contradiction, for those that are true Believers, cannot be out of possibility of salvation, but possibly may, yea most undoubtedly shall bee saved, *Joh.* 3.16. and 5.24. the contrary whereof is to overthrow all the promises of the Gospell, and with the Papists and Arminians to establish falling from grace.

2. For that saying, *Extra Ecclesiam non est salus*, wee conceive it cannot be universally true, if it be meant of the visible Church, which in the New-Testament is a particular Congregation; but onely being taken for the Church invisible, or the Vniversall Church, which is the whole company of the elect in Heaven, in Earth, and not yet borne, *Ioh.* 10.16. and 17.20. out of which elected Company there is not one that shall be saved, nor any of the elect neither, but in the way of Regeneration, *Ioh.* 3.3. but as for the Visible, we believe the old saying is true, *there are many Wolves within, and many Sheepe without*, Joh. 10.16. and therefore it cannot be universally true, that out of the Visible Church there is no salvation: Inasmuch as all Christs Sheepe shall be saved, *Ioh.* 10.28. of whom yet notwithstanding there are some not joyned to the Visible Church: If the Thiefe that repented on the Crosse was a Gentile, as it was possible he was; then hee was uncircumcised, and then it will trouble a Man to tell of what Visible Church he was: and yet there is no doubt but he was saved. The like may be said of *Iob* and of his friends, of whose salvation we make no question, and yet it is a great question whether they were of any Visible Church or no, inasmuch as the Visible Church in those times seemed to be appropriated to the House and posterity of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Iacob*, of which line & race it cannot easily be proved that all these men did come, nor that they joined themselves in Visible fellowship with that Church. The Centurion, *Mat.* 8.10. and the Woman of *Canaan*, *Mat.* 15. were both of them believers and saved, and yet it doth not appeare that they were members of the Visible Church of the Iews, which was the only visible Church of God in those times.

Men of yeares ought to be believers, and so in the state of Salvation afore they be joyned to the Visible Church, and therefore there may be salvation out of that Church: For it is possible

that such an one as being a Believer is fit to bee joyned to the Church may die and depart this life afore hee can bee joyned, as that good Emperour *Valentinian* 2. died before hee could bee baptized. And for your selves if you should thinke that Baptisme makes men members of the Visible Church; as is intimated in your fourth Question: you may not then deny but there may be salvation out of the visible Church: unlesse you will say that there is no salvation without Baptisme, which we believe is farre from you to imagine.

3. We doe hold that so oft and so long as a believer doth not joyne himselfe as a Member to some particular Congregation or other, so oft and so long he is without the Church in the Apostles sence, 1 *Cor.* 5. for the Church in the Apostles sence, is a particular Congregation; for he writeth to, and of the Church at *Corinth*, which Church was a particular Congregation, 1. *Cor.* 5, 4, & 14. 23. & 11. 17. 20. and having power of judgeing her own Members (as all visible Churches have) yet had no power of Judgeing any, but such as were within that particular Congregation, as all them they had power to judge, whether they were believers in Christ or no. Mr. *Baine* (as we said before) is very large and cleare in proving this Position, that the Churches instituted by Christ and the Apostles, were only such as might meet in one Congregation ordinarily, and answers many objections to the contrary, *Diocef. tryal. Q.* 1.

4. For the Question it selfe, we hold that every believer (if possibly he can) is alwayes bound to joyne himselfe as a Member to some particular Congregation or other; and yet not because, else he is a Heathen and Publican, or out of possibilitie of salvation, as this Question suggests, but upon other grounds.

1. Because of the Commandment of God, *Cant.* 1. 8. *Math.* 6. 10. 33.

2. Because willingly not to doe this is a secret disparagement to the wisdome of God that hath ordained Churches with giving power and privilegdes therunto, *Mat.* 18. 17. 1 *Cor.* 5. 4. and promises of his gracious presence to be with them and amongst them, *Mat* 18. 20. *Rev.* 2. 1. *Exod.* 20. 24. Now to what end were all these, if believers should live and not joyne themselves to some Church? These priviledges and promises would in such case be all in vain, and the mercy of God offered therin, unthankfully neglected.

3. Volun-

Thirdly, voluntarily abstaining from joyning to the Church is noted and condemned as a sinne, *Heb.* 10.25. and a signe of fearefull unbelievers, *Act.* 5.13. of the rest durst no man joyne unto them.

Fourthly, good men in Scripture have been forward in practise this way, *Isay* 2.2,3. *Zach.* 8.23. *Act.* 2.41,42. and 9.26. and have mourned with much bitternesse when they have been deprived of Liberty so to doe, *Isay* 56.3. and *Ps.* 42. and 63. and 84.

Fittly, this joyning is a part of that Order, and orderly walking which is required of believers, *Col.* 2.5. 1 *Cor.* 14.40.

Sixtly, If Believers doe neglect this joyning, it is not onely a wrong to themselves, but also a great unkindnesse to God: for if one believer may doe this, why not another, and if two why not three, foure &c. and if all believers should doe thus, God should have no visible Churches upon Earth, unles he will acknowledge the Assemblies to be of *unbelievers* Churches: foras stones in the *Mountains* are not an house untill they be joyned together, though they be digged up out of the Quarry, and squared & hewn, and hereby are made fit to be joyned together, and so to become an house: so believers are not a Church till they be joyned in holy Covenant in some Congregation, though the worke of Grace and Faith in their soules have made them fit, and meete to be a Church of God, which is the House of the living God: or as the humane soule and body are not a man unlesse they be united; so Christian or believers are not a visible Church without visible union into some particular Congregation. Mr. *Perkins* having said that forth of the militant Church: there are no meanes of salvation, no preaching of Gods word, no invocation of Gods Name, no Sacraments, and therefore no Salvation; concludes with these words; For this cause every man must be admonished evermore to joyn himselfe to some particular Church, being a sound Member of the Catholick Church, *Expos.* of *Creed* in the Article of the Church; and Doctor Ames gives 6. Reasons, why every Christian should joyne himselfe to some particular Church or other *Cas. Conse.* L. 4. c. 24. Q. 1. and in another place he hath these words. *Illi igitur qui occasionem habent*

habent adjungendi seſe Eccleſiæ, & eam negligunt, graviſsimè peccant, non tantum in Deum ratione Inſtitutionis, ſed etiam in ſuas proprias animas ratione benedictionis adjunctæ, etſi obſtinatè perſiſtant in ipſa incuria, quicquid alias profitentur, vix poſſunt haberi pro fidelibus Regnum Dei verè quarentibus. Medul. Theol. *l.* 1. *c.* 32. *Sect.* 28.

To 13. First, whereas this 13th. Queſtion ſpeakes of private and illiterate perſons into a Church Body combined, wee looke at this as an incongruous expreſſion, if not a contradiction. For a company ſo combined as to make a Church, are not fitly called private, (though they be illiterate in reſpect of humane learning) in as much as a Church or a Church-body, eſpecially in times and places of peace and liberty, is a publike Congregation and ſociety: and the acts of Communion which they have among themſelves (ſuch as is the election and depoſing of Miniſters, whereof the Queſtion makes mention) are not private acts, but publike or people-like. Neither are literate or learned men therefore publike, becauſe they are indued with humane learning, unleſſe withall they be called to publike office or imployment in Church or Common-wealth: and therefore if illiterate be an *exegeſis* of private, we conceive that *exegeſis* is not good.

Secondly, whereas this Queſtion asketh, *Whether it be lawfull and convenient that ſuch a company ſhould themſelvs ordinarily examine elect, ordain and depoſe their owne Miniſters?* if *ordinarily* be as much as *frequently*, we anſwer three things. Firſt, that if one Church doe frequently come to ſuch actions, that is, to take in and put out the ſame men, this is not without ſuſpition of much levity and raſhneſſe in the people, or unfaithfulneſſe or unworthy walking in the Miniſters, or both; and therefore *ordinarily*, that is, *frequent* taking in and putting out againe in this manner, is as much as may be to be avoided. Secondly, when ſuch things doe often and frequently fall out, it is doubtleſſe a Judgement of God upon ſuch a people to have ſo many changes in their Miniſters; as was that of which it was ſaid, *three ſhepheards have I cut off in one moneth*, *Zach.* 11.8. that People ſhould be ſo oft as ſheep

sheep having no Shepheard; *for the transgression of a land many are the Princes thereof, Pro.*28.2. So in like sort for the transgressions of a Church many are the Ministers thereof; we meane, when they have many Ministers, by the comming in and going out of the same men, or the removing of some and the taking in of others in their roome: for otherwise, it is a blessing of God, when a Church is furnished with variety of Ministers at the same time, *Acts* 13.1. & 21.18. *Phil.*1.1. Thirdly, yet this word (*ordinarily*) doth seeme to imply, that in your judgement sometimes this may be lawfull and convenient to be done; Now upon the same ground on which it may be done sometimes, upon the same it may be done at other times, if there be just occasion.

Thirdly, for the assistance of the Ministers of other Churches, of which this Question maketh mention; if this be onely by way of counsell or advice, we know nothing unlawfull or inconvenient in such assistance, because Churches are as Sisters one to another, *Cant.* 8.8. And therefore it is our practice in ordination of Ministers, as also in removall of them, to have such assistance. But for authority and power, we know none that Ministers have properly so called in any Congregation or Church, save that one, over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers: and therefore we thinke it not lawfull nor convenient, when a Church is to ordaine Officers, to call in such assistance (*viz.* by way of authority or power) of the Ministers of other Churches.

Fourthly, we judge it lawfull and convenient that every Church of Christ (what ever their humane learning be, whether much or lesse) should elect and choose their Ministers: God doth not (for ought we know) give this power of calling their owne Ministers unto such Churches as have many learned men in them, and deny it unto others; but gives it indifferently to every Church, as they are a Church, and so to one Church as much as to another. If we thought you doubted whether the power of calling Ministers were given by Christ unto the Church, we might here alledge many Reasons for it; but this being the constant judge-

ment of the eminent Lights of this age, and the former who have been ſtudious of Reformation, wee muſt hope (till we hear to the contrary) that your ſelves do not differ from them in this point. As for us, thoſe grounds and reaſons from the holy Scripture which are alledged by 1 *Calvin*, 2 *Zanchius*, 3 Mr *Cartwright*, 4 Dr *Ames*, and (5) others doe ſatisfie us in this particular. (1) *Institut* 4.3.14. 15. (2) *De redemp. in* 4.*precep.p.*1015.1016. &c. who alledgeth *Bucer* and *Muſculus*. (3) 1.*Reply p.* 44.*&c.* (4) *Medul. Theol.l.*1.*c.*21.*Sect.*30 *& caſ.conſc.lib.*4.*c.*25. *Q.*5. (5) *Demoniſt.of diſc.c.*4.

Fifthly, as for that objection which ſeemes to be implyed in the word *illiterate*, that it ſhould not be lawfull or convenient for a body to chooſe their owne Miniſters, becauſe they are illiterate, or want men of humane learning among them, wee further anſwere thereto; firſt, that among us when a company are to be combined into a Church-body, (as you ſpeake) there is uſually one or other among them who doe not want all humane learning but have been trained up in Univerſities, and uſually have been Miniſters and Preachers of the Word in our native Countrey, and approved by the godly there; and are here by the company that doe ſo combine intended to be choſen afterwards for Paſtors or Teachers: and accordingly, after the Church is gathered, are in due time elected and ordained into their places. Secondly, but yet if there were none ſuch among them at their firſt combining and uniting, we doe not ſee how this could hinder them of liberty to chooſe Miniſters to themſelves afterward, when God ſhall ſend any to them that may be fit for the worke; becauſe this is a liberty that Chriſt hath purchaſed for them by his precious bloud, and they that are fit matter to bee combined into a Church-body, are not ſo illiterate but they have learned the Doctrine of the holy Scripture in the fundamentall points thereof; they have learned to know the Lord and their owne hearts, they have learned Chriſt, the need they have of him, and of all the meanes of enjoying him, the worth that is in him, and the happineſſe laid up for them in him: and

therefore

therefore they may not be reproached as illiterate or unworthy to choose their owne Ministers: nay, they have the best learning, without which all other learning is but madnesse and folly, and science falsly so called, 1 *Tim.*6.20. and indeed of none account with God, nor available for direction and guidance in the affaires of the house of God, such as is this election of Ministers, nor for the salvation of the soule in another world, 1 *Cor.*1.19.20. & 2.14. *Job* 32.8.9. though it may be, and is very usefull therewith. Thirdly, you know and (we doubt not) doe abhorre as much as wee the spirit of those men that are proud of their owne learning, and vilified Believers in Christ for want thereof, saying, *Doe any of the Rulers, or of the Pharisees believe in him? but this people which know not the Law are cursed,* John 7.47. 48.49.

First, a company of fourty persons, or twenty, or lesse, is not such a small company, but they may be a Church properly and truely so called, if there be nothing against them but this, *that such a number may seeme not sufficient:* We do not finde that God doth any where say, they must be above fourty, or else they cannot be a Church; and therefore no mortall man can justly say it: Nay, rather that speech of Christ, of *two or three gathered together in his name,* Matth. 18.20. doth plainly imply that if there be a greater number then two or three, whom they being not satisfied in the answere of an offendor may appeale unto, and in so doing tell the Church, such a small number may be a Church, and may have the blessing of his presence to be among them. Besides, the time hath been, in the dayes of *Adam* and *Noah*, when there was not fourty persons in the world, and yet *Adams* family in his time, and *Noahs* in his, was in those dayes a Church, if there was any Church on earth. And if Christ and his twelve Disciples were the first Christian Church, it is too much for any man to say, that twenty or fourty is such a small company that they cannot be a Church. *To* 14.

Secondly, for the matter of Government, there is a difference between ability and right: In respect of the former,

in as much as some cases are more difficult then others, and some Churches of lesse spirituall abilities then others, and God doth not afford assistance and direction at some times so much as at others; therefore in such cases it is requisite that Churches should seeke for light, and counsell, and advice, from other Churches: as the Church at *Antioch* did send unto the Church at *Ierusalem* in a Question, which could not bee determined among themselves, *Act.* 15.2. But this is not because they have no right, but when they are not able.

Thirdly, as for right, let it be considered how the Church at *Antioch* did long endevour to have ended that matter amongst themselves, before they determined to send to *Ierusalem*, vers.2. which shewes that they had power or right to have transacted that businesse among themselves, if ability had served; or otherwise, that endevour had been sinfull, as being a presuming to doe that, whereunto they had no right. We conceive then that every Church, properly so called, though they be not above fourty, or twenty persons, or ten, or the least number that you mention, have right and power from Christ to transact all their owne Ecclesiasticall businesses among themselves, if so be they be able, and carry matters justly, and according to the Rules of the Word. The power of the Keyes, *Matth.*16.19. among other things noteth Ministeriall or delegated power of Government; and this power is committed by Christ unto the Church, as may appeare, if wee consider, first, to whom Christ directed his Speech in that place of Scripture; not to *Peter* alone, but to all the Disciples also, for to them all the Question was propounded by Christ, *vers.*15. And *Peter* answered in all their names.

Secondly, that he and they were not then looked upon as Apostles, or generall officers of all Churches (for that Commission was not yet given them) but as Disciples and Beleevers, believing with the heart, and confessing with the mouth Jesus Christ, the rocke upon whom the Church is built; wherein as they did represent all Believers, so in *Peter* and the rest, the Keyes are committed to all Believers that shall joine together in the same confession, according

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to the order and ordinance of Christ. And therefore afterward this power of Government is expressly given to the Church, *Matth.*18.17. according hereunto in that description of the visible Church, as it is instituted by Christ in the new Testament, *Rev.*4. The members of the Church are seene by *John* in a vision sitting on thrones, cloathed with white rayment, having on their heads Crownes of Gold, *vers.*14. Now Thrones and Crownes are ensignes of authority and power, to note unto us that authority and governing power, which is committed by Christ unto the Church. Doctor *Fulke* hath this saying; *The Keyes of the Kingdome of Heaven (whatsoever they are) be committed to the whole Church, and not to one person onely, as Cyprian, Augustine, Chrysostome, Jerome, and all the ancient Doctors (agreeably to the Scriptures) doe confesse, against the Popes pardons* chap.3 P.381. And elsewhere he saith; The authority of Excommunication pertaineth to the whole Church, although the judgement and execution thereof is to be referred to the Governours of the Church; which exercise that authority, as in the name of Christ, so in the name of the whole Church whereof they are appointed Governours, to avoid confusion: against the *Rhemists* on 1 *Cor.*5.*Sect.*3.

And Doctor *Whitaker* hath these words: *Hoc est quod nos dicimus Petrum gessisse personam omnium Apostolorum; quare hanc promissionem non uni Petro, sed toti Ecclesiæ factam esse, & totam Ecclesiam in illo claves accepisse. De pontif.Roman.Q.2.c.4.Sect.* 17. And in that Booke hee is pregnant and plaine in this, that by the Keyes is meant all Ecclesiasticall power and Jurisdiction, and that these Keyes are given in *Peter* to the whole Church: The same is also taught by Master *Parker Polit.Eccles.l.3.c.*1.2.3.4.5.6. where he proves by many Arguments, that every visible Church (which hee acknowledgeth to be no other but a particular congregation) hath the power of all Eccleasiasticall Government and Jurisdiction commited to it by Christ Jesus; and answereth many Objections to the contrary: And page 2 of that third Book, making mention of foure Opinions concerning those words of the Keyes, and power of binding and loosing

*Matth.*16.19. the first of them that understand the Pope onely to be meant thereby as *Peters* successour: the second of them that understand it of the Diocesan Bishop: The third of them that understand those words as meant of the Ministers but the Ministers alone: The fourth of them that understand *Peter* to represent the Church in that place, and therefore that that promise is made unto the Church: Of these he refuseth the three first as unsound, and maintaines the fourth as onely agreeing to the truth. And Master *Baine* saith, Every Church by Christs institution hath power of Government, *Dioces. Tryall Quest.* 1. *p.*8. And hee tells us page 11. what hee meant by Church: The word Church (saith he) wee understand here not figuratively tataken Metonymically for the place, Synecdochecally for Ministers administring ordinances; but properly, for a body politicke standing of People to be taught and governed, and of Teachers and Governours: So that in his judgement every Church (properly so called) hath power of Government within it selfe: and by these words of his it may also be concluded, that all power of Government is not in the Elders alone, for the power of Government by Church institution is in every Church properly so called; But Ministers are not a Church in propriety of speech, but onely figuratively by a synecdoche; And therefore all power of Government is not in the Ministers alone, but a Church properly so called is the Body politique, consisting of people and Ministers: But of this more may bee said in the next Question.

Fourthly, for the matters of Independency, whereof this *Question* also makes mention: We doe confesse the Church is not so independent but that it ought to dep nd on Christ both for direction from the rules of his holy Word *Ioh.* 10. 27. *Act.* 3. 23. and for the assistance of his holy Spirit, to discerne those rules, and to walke according to them when they shall be discerned, *Ioh.* 15. 5. and 16. 13. but for dependency upon men, or other Churches, or other subordination unto them in regard of Church Government or power, Wee know not of any such appointed by Christ in his Word. Our Saviours words are plaine, *If a man heare not*

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the Church, let him be to thee as an Heathen *or* Publican. And his promise unto his Church is plaine also, that *whatsoever they shall binde on earth, shall be bound in Heaven, &c. Mat.* 18. 17. &c. And the Apostle bids the Church deliver the impenitent sinner unto *Satan*, 1 *Cor.* 5. 4, 5, 6. Now when the man upon the Churches censure comes to be in case as an *Heathen* or *Publican*, yea becomes bound in Heaven as well as bound in earth, and also delivered unto *Satan*, this seems to us to be such a firme ratification of the Churches censure, as leaves no roome for any other Ecclesiasticall power on earth to reverse or disanull the same, and so takes away that kinde of dependency and subordination of Churches. *Nos plane dicimus Ecclesias initiò regi solitas esse à suis pastoribus, sic quidem ut nullis essent externis, aut Ecclesijs, aut Episcopis subditæ, non Colossensis, Ephæsinæ, non Philippensis, Thessalonicensi, non hæ Romanæ, non Romanæ cuiquam, sed paris omnes inter se juris essent, id est, sui omnes juris et mancipij Whitak. de Pontif. Roman. Question* 1. *Chapter* 1. *Section* 3. That is in summe. The Churches were not dependent and subordinate to others, but all of them absolutely free, and independent. Wee affirme saith Master *Baine*, that all Churches were singular Congregations equall in dependent each of other in regard of subjection. Dioceese tryall. *Q* 1 *pag.* 13. The twentieth Chapter of Mr. *Parker* his third Booke of *Eccles. Politie*, hath this Title *De summitate Ecclesiæ particularis*. And the Title of the 21. is, *De paritate Ecclesiarum* where he openeth and explaineth, and by many Arguments and Testimonies confirmeth what we hold of the independency and paritie of Churches, to which learned discourse of his, we referre you for further satisfaction in this point.

To 15.

Wee doe believe that Christ hath ordained that there should be a Presbytery or Eldership. 1 *Tim.* 4. 14. And that in every Church. *Tit.* 1. 5. *Acts* 14. 23. 1 *Cor.* 12. 28. whose worke is to teach and rule the Church by the Word and lawes of Christ. 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. and unto whom so teaching and ruling all the people ought to be obedient and submit themselves, *Heb.* 13. 17. And therefore a Government meerly Popular or Democraticall (which Divines and Ortho-

thodox Writers doe so much condemne in *Morillius*, and such like) is farre from the practice of these Churches, and we believe farre from the minde of Christ.

Secondly, nevertheless a Government meerely Aristocratical, wherein the Church government is so in the hands of some *Elders*, as that the rest of the body are wholly excluded from entermedling by way of power therein, such a government we conceive also to be without Warrant of the Word, and likewise to be injurious to the people, as infringing that liberty which Christ hath given to them in choosing their owne Officers, in admitting of Members, and censuring of offendors, even Ministers themselves when they be such; as the Church of *Colosse* must admonish *Archippus* of his duety, *Col.* 4. 17. Master *Parker* you know hath 22. Arguments to prove the superiority of the Churches over and above her officers, *Polit. Eccles. lib. 3. cap.* 12. And Master *Baine* saith, If the Church have power by election to choose a Minister, and so power of instituting him, then of destituting also: *Instituere & destituere ejusdem est potestatis*, Dioces. Triall P. 88. And againe, no reason evinceth the Pope, though a generall Pastors subject to the censure of a Church oecumenicall, but the same proveth a Diocesan Bishop, (and wee may adde, and a Congregationall Minister) subject to the censure of the particular Church, *pag.* 89. And whereas it might be objected, then may Sheep censure the Shepherd, Children their fathers, which were absurd. To this he answereth, that similitudes hold not in all things, naturall Parents are no waies Children, nor in state of subjection to their Children: but spirituall fathers are so fathers, that in some respects they are children to the whole Church. So Shepherds are no waies Sheep, but Ministers are in regard of the whole Church. 2. Parents and Shepherds are absolutely Parents and Shepherds, bee they good or evill, but spirituall Parents and Pastors are no longer so, then they do accordingly behave themselves *p.* 89. (To the same purpose and more at large is this Objection answered by Master *Parker*, Polit. Eccles. *l.* 3. *c.* 12. *p.* 78. 79. And againe, if their owne Churches have no power over them, it will be hard to shew wherein others have

have such power of Jurisdiction over persons who belong not to their owne Churches, *p.* 89. So that all power is not in the Officers alone, seeing the Officers themselves, if they offend, are under the power of the Church. Even *Paul* himselfe though an extraordinary Officer, yet would not take upon him to excommunicate the incestuous person, without the Church, but sends to them exhorting them to doe it; and blames them because they had not done it sooner, 1 *Cor.* 5. which shewes that the exercise of all Church power of government, is not in the Officers alone: And therefore the *Lord Iesus* reproving *Pergamus* and *Thyatira* for suffering *Balaamites*, *Nicholaitans*, and the woman *Iezebel* among them, and calling on them for reformation herein, *Rev.* 2. sends his Epistle, not onely to the Angels of those Churches, but also to the Churches, or whole Congregations, as appeareth *Rev.* 1. 11. And also in the conclusion of those Epistle, where the words are, let him that hath an eare heare what the spirit saith, (not onely to the Angels) but unto the Churches; whereby it appeares, that the suffering of these corrupt persons and practises, was the sinne of the whole Church, and the reforming of them, a duty required of them all. Now the reforming of abuses in the Church, argues some exercise of Church government, as the suffering of them argues some remissenesse therein; and therefore it followes, that some exercise of Church government was required of the whole Church and not all of the Angels alone. Sure it is the whole Congregation of *Israel* thought it their duty to see to the reforming of abuses, when they appeared to spring up amongst them, as appeareth by their behaviour & practise when the two Tribes and an halfe had set up the Altar upon the bankes of *Jordan*, *Ios.* 22. for it is said, that the whole Congregation of the Children of *Israel* gathered themselves together at *Shilo*, to go up to warre against them, *v.* 12. And when *Phinëas* and ten Princes with him, were sent to expostulate with them about the matter, it was the whole Congregation that sent them, *v.* 13, 14. And when they delivered their Message they spake in the name of the whole Congregation, saying, Thus saith the whole congregation of the Lord, what trespasse is this? &c. *v.* 16.

which plainely declares, that the whole congregation (and not the Elders or Rulers alone) thought it their duty to see abuses reformed and redressed, which could not be without some exercise of government. And when *Achan* the Sonne of *Carmi* had committed a trespasse in theaccursed thing, *Ios.* 7. it is counted the sinne of the whole congregation, and such a sinne as brought a Plague upon them all: for it is said the children of *Israel* committed a trespasse in the accursed thing, *v.* 1. And God saith to *Ioshua* (not the *Elders* have sinned, but) *Israel* hath sinned, and they have transgressed my Covenant, and they have stolne of the accursed thing, and put it among their owne stuffe. *v.* 11. And for this, wrath fell on all the congregation of *Israel*, and that man perished not alone in his iniquity, *Iosh.* 22. 20. Now why should not he have perished alone, but wrath must fall upon them all? and why should his sinne, be the sinne of all the congregation, if the care of preventing it, and timely suppressing the same, (which could not be without some exercise of Church government) had not bin a duty lying upon all the whole congregation, but upon the Elders and Officers alone? doubtlesse the just Lord, who saith, every man shall beare his owne burden, *Gal.* 6. 5. would not have brought wrath upon all the congregation for *Achans* sinne, if such government as might have prevented, or timely reformed the same, had not belonged to the whole congregation, but to the *Elders* alone. And before this time all the children of *Israel* (and not the *Elders* alone) are commanded to put Lepers and uncleane persons out of the Campe, *Numb.* 5. 1, 2. By all which it appeareth, that all exercise of Church Government is not in the *Elders* alone, but some power is in the people.

And else-where he counts it no Sacriledge for Members of the Church, though not in office, to handle those keyes, *Mat.* 16. but rather a frivolous thing to thinke otherwise; *Quasi absque sacrilegio, saith he, tractare claves privati nequeant, qui eas privatim tractare jubeantur. Quoties fratres suos admonere, consolari, et ædificare. Imò verò est & publica clavium tractatio quam plebs Christiana in unum coacta sine ullo sacrilegio ministrat,* 1 Cor. 5. *Polit. Eccles. l.* 3. *c.* 2. *p.* 8. And yet this is not a singular

singular conceit of his or ours, but the concurrent judgement of many worthy witnesses of the truth in these latter dayes, who do with great consent hold the Ecclesiasticall government to be of a mixt form compounded of all three Estates, and that the people are not to be wholly excluded " from having any thing to do therein. *Si velimus Christum* " *ipsum respicere, fuit semper Ecclesiæ Regimen monarchicum: Si* " *Ecclesiæ presbyteros, qui in Doctrina et disciplina suas partes* " *agebant, Aristocraticum: si totum corpus Ecclesiæ quatenus in Ele-* " *ctione Episcoporum et presbyterorum suffragia ferebat, ita tamen* " *ut εὐταξία semper à presbyteris servaretur, Democraticum: Sic* " *partim Aristocritum partim Democraticum, partim etiam Monar-* " *chicum est, semperque fuit Ecclesiæ Regimen,* Whita. *de pontif.* " Rom. Qu. 1. *c.* 1. *sect.* 2. The Church (saith Mr. *Cart-* " *wright*) is governed with that kinde of Government, " which the Philosophers that write of the best Com- " mon-wealths affirme to be the best. For in respect of " Christ the head it is a Monarchy, and in respect of the " Ancients and Pastors that Governe in Common, and " with like Authority among themselves, it is an Aristo- " craty, or rule of the best men; and in respect that the peo- " ple are not secluded, but have their interest in Church " matters, it is a Democraty, or popular State, 1 *Reply p.* 51. And when Dr. *Whitegift*, from the Doctrine of the Authors of the Admonition would infer this consequence, *viz.* that then the more that ruled the better estate it should be, and so the popular state should be the best: In Answer " hereunto he saith, I have spoken of this before, where I " declared that the mixed estate is best, both by the exam- " ple of the Kingdome of Christ, and also of this our " Realme, *pag.* 181. 182. And againe, whereas Mr. Dr. " saith, that Excommunication, and consequently Absolu- " tion or restoring to the Church again pertaineth only to " the Minister: it remaineth that I shew that the *Presbytery* " or *Eldership* and the whole *Church* also, hath interest in the " excommunication and consequently in the absolution or " restoring unto the Church againe, *p.* 183. And " againe, it is certaine Saint *Paul* did both understand and " observe the rule of our Saviour Christ (*viz* that rule,

" *Mat.* 18. *Tell the Church*) but he communicateth this " power of Excommunication with the Church : and " therefore it must needs be the meaning of our Saviour " Christ, that the Excommunication should be by many, " and not by one, and by the Church, and not by the Mi- " nister of the Church alone, for hee biddeth the Church " of *Corinth* twise in the first Epistle, once by a Metaphor, " another time in plaine words, that they should Excom- " municate the Incestuous person. And in the 2d. Epistle, " understanding of the Repentance of the man, he intreat- " eth them that they would receive him again: And ther- " fore considering that the Absolution of the Excommu- " nication doth pertain unto the *Churches*, it followeth that " the excommunication doth in like manner appertainunto " it, *p.* 184. And again that the Ancients had the ordering of " these things, and that the peoples consent was required, " & that the *Ministers* did not take upon them of their own " Authority to Excommunicate, *&c.* It may appeare al- " most in every page of *Cyprians Epistles*. In *Augustines* time " it appeareth also, that that consent of the Church was " required, *p.* 187.

To these may be added, Mr. *Fenner*, who speaking of the Ecclesiasticall Presbytery and of the businesse which the Presbytery is to deale in, which hee distinguisheth into judiciarie, as deciding of doubts and dispencing of Censures, and extrajudiciary, as Election, Ordination *&c.* hath these words, *Atque hæc sunt negotia quæ præstari debent: In quibus per omnes Ecclesias summa Ecclesiastica potestas presbyterio demandata est, ita tamen ut in his quæ maximi sunt momenti, et ad ecclesiæ totius bonum vel ruinam maxime spectant, post πρεσβυτερου suam de his captum consilia Ecclesiæ denuncientur, ut si quid habeant quod consulant vel objiciant in medium proferant: postea, autem auditis et assentientibus (nisi ad majorem Senatum negotium deferri fuerit, necesse ad turbas vitandas sive componendas, quod tum cum Major pars Ecclesiæ dissentit, faciendum est) decernenda et pro decretis Ecclesiis proponenda sunt*, and then he declares what hee meanes by those matters *maximi momenti, viz.* excommunication, absolution, elections, and deposings of *Ministers*, and such like, *Sacræ The. lib.* 7. *c* 7. wherin he plainly sheweth, that though the power

of

of the Prelbytery be very great yet in things ofgreateſt moment, as Cenſures and Elections, the people if they have any thing to counſell or object, have liberty to bring it in; and afterwards matters are to be concluded when they have bin heard ſpeake, and have given their conſent, for which liberty and power of the people, he bringeth theſe Scriptures, 2 *Chro.* 30. 23. *Acts* 1. 15. 23. 26. 1 *Cor.* 5. 4. & 2 *Cor.* 1. 6. 7. *Zanchius* ſpeaking of that Queſtion, *per quos exerceri debet excommunicatio*, anſwers thus, *nempe per Eccleſiam, ſeu per miniſtros Eccleſiæ nomine, eoque et cum conſenſu totius Eccleſiæ Promiſſio illa, Quæcunq; ligaveritis, ad totam Eccleſiam eſt facta*, Ergo *&c. Præterea Apoſtolus hoc expreſſius declaravit*, 1 Cor. 5. *congregatis vobis, &c. alloquebatur autem totam Eccleſiam. Patres idem docent: Cyprianus ad Cornelium Rom. Epiſcopum ſcribit ſe multum laboraſſe apud plebem, ut par daretur lapſis pœnitentibus: Si ergo non erat unius Epiſcopi cum ſuo Preſbyterio ſolvere quempiam, ſed requirebatur plebis eoque totius Eccleſiæ conſenſus: Ergo neque ligari quiſpiam poterat, id eſt Excommunicari, ſine totius Eccleſiæ conſenſu. Auguſtinus etiam contra Donatiſtas ait, ſuperſedendum eſſe excommunicatione Quando tota plebs laborant eodem morbo, Quid ita? cauſam adfert, Quia inquit, non aſſentientur excommunicationi, &c. Satis aperte docet tunc temporis non ſolitum fuiſſe excommunicationem ferri in Quempiam ſine totius Eccleſiæ conſenſu; et ratio eſt in promptu, Quæ enim ad omnes pertinent cum conſenſu omnium fieri debent: Ergo ſine totius Eccleſiæ conſenſu excommunicari nemo debet.* And then comparing the Government of the Church, to the Roman Common-wealth which had the Dictators, the Senate and the Quirites, and ſhewing that the Church government in reſpect of Chriſt is a Monarchy, in reſpect of the Preſbyters an Ariſtocratie, and in reſpect of the people a Democratie, he concludes thus, *In rebus igitur graviſſimis, quæ ad totum corpus pertinent, ut eſt Excommunicatio, ſine conſenſu et authoritate totius Eccleſiæ nihil fieri debet, de Redempt. in præf. 1. pag. 983. &c.* *Calvins* words are theſe, *Cyprianus cum meminit per quos ſuo tempore exerceretur* (viz. *poteſtas juriſdictionis*) *adjungere ſolet totum Clerum Epiſcopo, ſed alibi quoque demonſtrat, ſic præfuiſſe clerum ipſum, ut plebs interim à cognitione non excluderetur, ſic enim ſcribit; Ab initio Epiſcopatus mei ſtatui ſine Cleri conſilio & plebis*

*conſenſu nihil agere, Inſtit.*1.4.*c.*11.*Sect.*6. And againe, *Hoc addo, illam eſſe legitimam in excommunicando homine progreſſionem quam demonſtrat Paulus, ſi non ſoli Seniores ſeorſim id faciant, ſed conſcia & approbante Eccleſia, in eum ſcilicet modum, ut plebis multitudo non regat actionem, ſed obſervet, ut teſtis & cuſtos, ne quid per libidinem à paucis geratur, Inſtit.*l.4.*c.*12.*Sect.*7. Thoſe Miniſters that penned the Chriſtian and modeſt offer of diſputation, doe ſay, That the Paſtor and Elders that exerciſe Eccleſiaſticall Juriſdiction, ought not to performe any maine and materiall Eccleſiaſticall act, without the free conſent of the congregation, in Propoſ.8.

The Refuter of Doctor *Downams* Sermon for the ſuperiority of Dioceſan Biſhops, is plaine and full alſo in this point, in *Part* 2. of his reply *p.*104. 105, 106. where anſwering Doctor *Downam*, that counted it ſchiſmaticall novelty, that the forme of the Church Government ſhould be holden in part to be Democrattcall, and that his Refuter for ſo holding was a *Browniſt* or *Anabaptiſt*; he not onely proves the power of the people from the Scripture, and delivers his owne judgement, that the Eccleſiaſticall Government is of a mixt forme, compounded of all three Eſtates; but for the ſame tenent, and that the Church government is in part Democraticall or popular, he alledgeth the teſtimonies of the Centuries, of *Illyricus*, of Doctor *Fulke*, Doctor *Willet*, *Cyprian*, *Auguſtine*, *P. Martyr*, Dr *Whitaker*, and others: Maſter *Baines* his judgement we heard before in the former Queſtion. *Vrſinus* ſpeaking of that Queſtion, *Quibus commiſſa eſt poteſtas clavium*, hath theſe words: *Quibus denunciatio verbi divini delegata eſt, iiſdem & poteſtas illa clavium; quæ verò denunciatio fit in Eccleſiaſtica diſciplina eſt totius Eccleſiæ, ad totam enim Eccleſiam pertinet diſciplina & juriſdictio ſpiritualis, ſed alio modo fit illa denunciatio in verbi divini miniſterio, quam in Eccleſiæ judicio.* And then telling how this denunciation is done in the Miniſtery, and by the Miniſters of the Word, he comes to declare how it is done in Church cenſures: *In Eccleſiaſtico judicio* (ſaith he) *gratiæ & iræ Dei non fit denunciatio ab uno aliquo privatim ſed à tota Eccleſia aut nomine totius Eccleſiæ ab iis qui ad hoc delecti ſunt communi omnium conſenſu.* And a little after, anſwering objections brought againſt the uſe

uſe of Excommunication, he hath theſe words: *Poteſt concedi quod Chriſtus non intelligat Presbyterium* (*viz.* in that place *Matth.* 18. *Tell the Church*) *ſed propriè ſumat vocabulum Eccleſiæ ante Chriſtum Judaicæ, poſt Chriſtum Chriſtianæ: Sed in Eccleſiæ juriſdictione oportet aliquem eſſe ordinem, aliquos oportet eſſe conſtitutos ab Eccleſia, alioquin eſſet* ἀταξία. And ſpeaking of that Queſtion, *Quis ordo ſervari debeat in exercenda clavium poteſtate* (he ſaith) *principalis pars in excommunicatione eſt denunciatio, qua &c. atque hæc denunciatio qua quis excommunicatur non eſt penes Miniſtrum Eccleſiæ, ſed penes ipſam Eccleſiam, & ejus nomine fit, quia mandatum hoc à Chriſto datum eſt Eccleſiæ; nam ipſe ait expreſsè, Dic Eccleſiæ.* And finally, ſpeaking of abuſes to be avoided, and cautions to be obſerved in Excommunication, he hath ſuch words in the fourth Propoſition, or Rule there annext, as doe declare it to be his judgement, that if Excommunication ſhould be paſſed by a few, without the conſent of the whole Church, ſuch proceedings would be both Oligarchy and Tyranny: *Attentem expendatum* (ſaith he) *à toto Presbyterio, probetur ab Eccleſia, non ſuſcipiatur privatâ authoritate, ne miniſterium Eccleſiæ convertatur in* ὀλιγαρχίαν *& Tyrannidem*, in his Comment upon the Catechiſme, in the place *De clavibus regni cœlorum.*

Pareus delivering certaine *poriſmata* or conclufions concerning Excommunication, hath this for the fifth of them, *Quòd excommunicandi poteſtas non ſit penes unum Epiſcopum, vel paucos paſtores, ſed penes Eccleſiam; proindelicet paſtores & presbyteri ordinis causâ primas habeant partes circa cenſuras Eccleſiaſticas, & per eos hæ adminiſtrentur; quod tamen citra conſenſum Eccleſiæ paſtores ad excluſionem procedere non debeant, alibi demonſtravimus in* 1 *Cor.* 5. And a little after, anſwering *Stapletons* objections that would have the power of Excommunication to be in the Biſhop alone, he brings in the caſe of *Cyprian*, who could not abſolve the *Lapſi* without the people: *Cyprianus* (ſaith hee) *ad Cornelium Romanum Epiſcopum ſcribit ſe multum apud plebem laboraſſe ut pax daretur lapſis, quam ſi per ſe dare potuiſſet, non erat cur adeo in perſuadenda plebe ſe fatigaſſet.* So that in the judgement of *Pareus* and *Cyprian* all power of Church government was not in the Presbyters, but

but some power was in the people.

Musculus, although he thinke there be little use of Excommunication and Church discipline, where there is a Christian Magistrate, yet when it is to be used, he would not have the people excluded from having any hand therein, as may appeare by those words of his, where he speakes *De disciplina Ecclesiastica: Hisce de rebus non constituet Minister suo proprio arbitratu, sed erit ad institutionem earum director, & adhibebit suffragia & consensum suæ plebis, ne quicquam invitæ Ecclesiæ imponatur. Denique curabit ut plebs ipsa viros graves, timentes Dei, ac boni testimonii deligat, quorum curâ & vigilantiâ disciplina Ecclesiastica administratur, & si quid gravioris momenti accidat, ad ipsam Ecclesiam referatur: Loc. com. de Ministris verbi Dei, in tit. de potestate Ministrorum p. 377.* And afterward, in the latter end of that place, comming to speake of the deposing of unworthy Ministers, he hath these words: *Quæritur hic per quos disciplina ista administrari debeat? Respondeo, primum Ecclesiæ populus potestatem habens elegendi dignum Ministrum, habet etiam (teste Cypriano) potestatem indignum recusandi: deinde qui Judices sunt Censoresque morum in Ecclesia ex officio tenentur redarguere peccantem Ministrum, si duobus aut tribus testibus fide dignis coram Ecclesiâ Dei convictus fuerit. Tertiò, iidem cum consensu & suffragiis plebis deponent Ministrum, vel ad tempus, vel in universum, vel excommunicabunt tandem juxta qualitatem peccati vel defectus illius*, p. 429. Doctor *Ames* saith, *Potestas hujus disciplinæ (viz.* of Excommunication) *quoad jus ipsum pertinet ad Ecclesiam illam in communi, cujus membrum est peccator: ad illos enim pertinet ejicere, ad quos pertinet primò admittere, & corporis totius interest ex æquo membrorum conservatio vel amputatio, cum Ecclesiæ idcirco consensu (eoque Magistratu non permittente tantum, sed & approbante & constituente) est executioni mandanda.* Medul. Theol. l. 1. c. 37. Sect. 26.

Lastly, Master *Parker* observing a distinction betweene power, and the dispencing of power; that the one is in the Church and the other in the Presbyters, hath these words: *Neque tamen dispensatio omnis, omneque exercitium est penes rectores solos, sed juxta temperamentum formæ partim Aristocraticæ, partim Democraticæ de mandato Rectoribus suis Ecclesiæ, quæ ipsa per se obire satis commodè nequit, retinente vero dispensationem illam*

lam illudque exercitium quod & ipsi convenit, & pertinet ad ejus dignitatem, authoritatem, & libertatem à Christo donatam. Posit. Eccles. l. 3. c. 7. And elsewhere he saith, *Imo vero est & publica clavium tractatio, quam plebes Christiana in unum coacta, sine ulle sacrilegio administrat.* Polit. Eccles. l. 3 c. 2 p. 8.

These testimonies we thought good to produce in this Question, lest any should thinke that to give any Church power of Government to the people, were some singular opinion of ours, swerving from the truth, and disallowed by Orthodox Writers of the Reformed Churches; and no doubt but besides these here cited, the same is taught by others also, whom now we spare to alledge, intending onely these few for a taste instead of many.

2. And therefore when this Question demandeth whether we give the exercise of all Church power of government to the whole Congregation, or to the *Presbyters* thereof alone? Our Answer is, neither thus nor so, neither all to the people excluding the Presbytery, nor all to the Presbytery excluding the People. For this were to make the government of the Church either meerly Democraticall, or meerly Aristocraticall, neither of which we believe it ought to be.

3. Whereas this Question demandeth to know what acts of Government the Presbyters may doe more then any other may doe, and to have those particular acts mentioned: this seemeth to us to be a very large demand, for who is able to mention all the particular acts of government, which any one Governour may performe in his time, especially if he continue long in his place? But if your meaning in this Point be not of the Individualls, but of the species or kinds, yet even there also it is much to require the particular mentioning of all; yet to give you a taste take these The calling of Assemblies and dismissing of the same againe; The ordinary preaching of the Word, which is done by way of Office; and being the peoples mouth unto God in Prayer; The dispensing of Baptisme, and the Lords Supper: The permitting of any to speak in an orderly way; and againe enjoining silence: The putting of matters to Vote, and pronouncing of sentence in the censure of offendors, or receiving

ceiving in of Penitents after their fall, and blessing of the people in the name of the Lord; These are Acts of Church Government, which the Presbyters may doe according to the Word, and another member may not do without breach of Order and presuming above his place.

4. It is also here demanded, what the Presbyters may do without the particular consent of the rest? To which wee answer, that when they doe what the Lord Christ (whose Stewards they are) by his word requires of them in their places, this should not be without the consent of the rest, for the rest of the Church ought to consent thereto: Christs Sheep ought to heare his voice, *Iohn* 10. 27. and to obey them that speak unto them in his name, *Heb.* 13. 17. And if any man should in such case willfully dissent, the Church ought to deale with such an one, for not consenting to the will and waies of Christ, or else they shall all be guilty of the sinfull dissent of such an one. So that this Passage (if it be meant of Presbyters doing their duty) without the consent of the people, goes upon a supposall (in respect of the people) of that which never ought to be, neither are wee to suppose but that there may be rule when the *Elders* and Brethren doe not dissent nor are divided one from another: The multitude of them that believed in the first Christian Church at *Ierusalem*, were of one heart and of one soule, *Act.* 4. 32. Yet none needs to doubt, but there was rule and Government amongst them, when yet their agreement was such, that the Apostles and Elders did nothing without the full consent of the rest. It is a miserable mistake either to thinke that in the Church of Christ the Elders and Brethren must needs dissent one from another, or if they all consent, that then there can be no ruling but against the peoples minde. They were none of the best Shepheards to their flocks unto whom the Lord saith, with force and rigour have you ruled them, *Ezech.* 34. 4. As for doing any thing in their places, which the word of Christ, the Lord and Master of the Church, commandeth not, nor alloweth such things they neither ought to do nor ought the Church to consent unto them if they should; for that were to make themselves partakers of their Rulers sinnes, and so to bring

Judgement

Judgement upon them all, as when the Priests did wickedly beare rule, and the people loved to have it so, *Ieremiah* 5. 31.

5. Lastly, this Question demandeth how, and over whom in those Acts of Government, which are done by the Elders more then by other Members, or without the consent of the rest, the Presbyters doe rule in propriety of speaking more then the rest of the Congregation? wherein are sundry particulars.

1. How they rule? Whereunto wee answer, that neither the *Elders* nor the people doe rule with Lordly and Princely rule, and Soveraigne authority and power; for that is proper to Christ over his Church: who is the onely Lord, 1 *Cor.* 12. 5. And King and Lawgiver that is able to save and to destroy, *Isa.* 33. 23. *Psal.* 2. *Luk.* 19. 27. *Jam.* 4. 12. *The Elders are forbidden to be Lords over Gods heritage,* 1 *Pet.* 5. 3. *Or to exercise authority as the Kings and Princes of the earth doe,* Matth. 20. 25,26. Luk. 22. 25,26. They are not so to rule, as to doe what themselves please, but they must do whatsoever *Christ* hath commanded, *Mat.* 28. 20. Mr. *Baine* sheweth from these words there are diversities of Ministeries, but one Lord, 1 *Cor.* 12. 5. That it is contrary to the Scripture that there should be in the Church more Lords then one: (and saith he) look as great Lords have in their Houses Ministers of more and lesse honour, from the Steward to the Scullery, but no Lord-like or Masterlike power in any besides themselves: So is it with Christ and his Church, which is the House of God, wherein hee is the Lord, Apostles and others having more or lesse honourable services, but no Masterlike power over the meanest of their fellow servants: On *Ephes.* 1. 22. *p.* 395. and elsewhere he saith no Minister of the Word hath any power but Ministeriall in the Church, the power of the Apostles themselves and *Evangelists* is called διακονία, *Acts* 20. 2 *Tim.* 4. Yea such a service as doth make the Ministers having it so servants, that they are no way Lords; many Ministers, one Lord; we preach Christ Iesus the Lord; our selves your servants for Iesus sake, *Dioces.* Tryall. *Q.* 2. *p.* 74. The Elders are to rule as Stewards, *Mat.* 24. 45. *Luke* 12.

42. As Shepheards, *Act.* 20. 28. As Captaines, guides, leaders or overseers, by going before the People, and shewing them the word and way of the Lord, 1 *Tim.* 3. 1. 5. & 5. 17. 1 *Thes.* 5. 12. *Heb.* 13. 17.

2. How they rule more then the rest of the Congregation do? Whereto the Answer is, that this is more then the rest of the Congregation doe in these acts, even as acting is more then consenting, and as it is more to be a Steward over of the House then one of the household, or to be a guide or leader, then to be guided or led.

3. Over whom they doe rule? even over the whole Church in generall, and every Member in particular, even all the flocke over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers, *Act.* 20. 28. 1 *Pet.* 5. 2.

To 16. The rule is expresse and plaine that women ought not to speake in the Church, but to be in silence, 1 *Cor.* 14. 34. 1 *Tim.* 2 11,12. And therefore they ought not to vote in Church matters; besides voting imports some kind of government, and authority and power: now it is not government and authority, but subjection and obedience which belongs unto women, by the rule, and so is the practice of women amongst us.

To 17. Church matters ought not to be determined meerly by multitude or plurality of Votes, but by rules from the word of Christ, whose will, (and not the will either of the Major, or Minor part of men,) is the onely rule and Law for Churches, *Iam.* 4. 12. *Isa.* 33. 22. *Mat.* 23. 8,9. *Exod.* 23. 2. 21, 22. For our practice among us, the Major part of the Church, yea usually the whole Church doth consent and agree in one minde, and one judgement, and so gives a joint unanimus Vote; and the rule requires it should be so *Rom.* 15. 6. and the example of the Primitive Apostolike Churches, where things were carried (nor meerly by the Major or Minor part, the rest dissenting, but) ὁμοθυμαδὸν, or with one accord, *Act.* 1. 14. & 2. 46. & 4. 24. & 5. 12. & 15. 25. So that in this sence matters with us are carried according to the Vote of the Major part, that is, with the joint consent

sent of the whole Church, but yet becauſe it is the minde of Chriſt. But it may be your meaning is in this *Queſtion* to take it for granted that the Churches will be divided in their Votes, and to know what courſe we take at ſuch times: But if Churches lay aſide their owne affections, and give attendance to the rule, and be (as all Churches ought to be) men of humble ſpirits, and ſincere, and withall depend on Chriſt their head and King for guidance, in their worke, we know no neceſsity of ſuch a ſuppoſall, that they muſt needs be divided in their votes, eſpecially conſidering what promiſes he hath made unto his Church, of godly concord and agreement among themſelves, and of his owne gracious preſence in the midſt of them, *Ier.* 32. 39. *Zeph.* 3. 9. *Mat.* 18. 20. which promiſes we believe are not in vaine. Nevertheleſſe, we deny not but through the corruptions & diſtempers of men, ſome diſſention may ariſe for a time in a true Church, as it was in the Church at *Corinth*: and if any ſuch thing fall out among us (which we bleſſe God is not often) then before matters be put to the vote, our courſe of proceeding is after this manner. If the Elders and Major part of the Church conſent in one concluſion, yet if any brother diſſent, he is patiently heard, and his alledgements of Scripture or good reaſons are duely weighed: If it appeare that his judgement is according to the rule, the whole Church will readily yeeld, though before they were otherwiſe minded. But if it appeare they who diſſent from the Major part, are factiouſly or partially carried, the reſt labour to convince them of their error by the rule, if they yeeld, the conſent of all comfortably concurreth in the matter; if they ſtill continue obſtinate, they are admoniſhed, and ſo ſtanding under cenſure, their vote is nullified. If they without obſtinate oppoſition of the reſt, doe diſſent ſtill, yet referre the matter to the judgement of the Major part of the body, they are not wont to proceed to ſentence (if the matter be weighty as in Excommunication) till the reaſons on both ſides have bin duly pondered, and all brotherly means have been uſed for mutuall information and conviction. If the difference ſtill continue the ſentence (if the matter be weighty) is ſtill demurred, even till other Churches have

been consulted with, who in such a case will send their Elders to communicate their apprehensions and light, which they do not *pro imperio*, binding the Church to rest in their dictates but by propounding their grounds from the Scripture. These courses with Gods presence and blessing (which usually accompanieth his Ordinance) faithfully taken and followed, will prevaile either to settle one unanimous consent in the thing, or at least to preserve peace in the Church by the dissentors submission to the judgement of the Major part, though they see not light sufficient to warrant them to act in the businesse: Such subjection is according to the rule, *Ephes.* 5. 21. 1 *Pet.* 5. 5. If the Church or the Elders should refuse the testimony of other Churches according to God, they will (after brotherly admonition and due patient waiting) deny them the right hand of fellowship, till they shall give better evidence of their subjection to the Gospel of Christ. But thanks be to God we never had occasion of such withdrawing communion of one Church from another, though now and then (as need requireth) Churches send to other Churches for their counsell and advice.

To 18. Meanes to preserve the Churches in unitie and verity, and to reforme any that may erre, thankes bee to God we have sundry. First, the holy Scriptures, which are a perfect rule for Doctrine and practise, 2 *Tim.* 3. 15 16. 2 *Pet.* 1. 19. *Psal.* 19. 7, 8. Secondly, the Ministery appointed by Christ, *viz.* of Pastors, Teachers, Elders, and Deacons, *Ephes.* 4. 11, 12. 1 *Cor.* 12. 28. 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. 1 *Tim.* 3. 1, 2. *&c* and *vers.* 8. and in both these we have frequently holden forth unto us the Commandement of God, wherein he requires Churches to bee of one mind and one judgement in the truth, 1 *Cor.* 1. 10. & 2. 13. 11. *Ephes.* 4. 3. & *Phil.* 1. 27. & 2. 1, 2. and his promise to lead his people into all truth, and holy agreement therein, *Jer.* 32. 29. *Isa* 11 6, 7 &c. *Zeph.* 3. 9. *Ioh.* 16. 13. with many motives and Rules from Scripture for continuing in the said truth and love. Now Faith makes use of these promises, and submits to these precepts and exhortations, and so both these being mixt with Faith

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are profitable meanes by the bleſsing of God for that end aforeſaid, *Heb.* 4. 2. as theſe Churches have found by experience, for theſe yeares ſince our comming into this Countrey: And any other meanes ſanctified of God for the aforeſaid end, we hope we ſhould be glad with thankfull hearts to improve and make uſe of as the Lord ſhall help.

As for a Platforme of Doctrine and Diſcipline which you mention, as one meanes hereunto, if thereby you meane no more but a confeſsion of Faith of the holy doctrine which is according to godlineſſe, we know nothing but it may be lawfull and expedient in ſome caſes for any particular perſon that hath received the gift to doe it; or any Church, or all the Churches in any Chriſtian Common-wealth, to compile and ſet forth ſuch a platforme. The practiſe of thoſe Churches, whoſe Confeſsions are contained in that booke called *The harmony of Confeſſions*, as alſo of Maſter *Robinſon* at *Leiden*, and others of our Nation in other parts in the *Low-countries*, who have publiſhed ſuch platformes, we ſee no reaſon to condemne or diſallow: neither count we it unlawfull or inexpedient for any Church or Churches, or perſon or perſons in the countrey, upon juſt occaſion to doe the like.

But if your meaning be of a platforme to be impoſed by authority upon others, or our ſelves, as a binding Rule of Faith and practice, ſo that all men muſt believe and walke according to that platforme, without adding, altering or omitting, then we are doubtfull whether ſuch platformes be lawfull or expedient. For if the Doctrine contained therein doe in any particular ſwerve from the Doctrine contained in Scripture, then the impoſing of them is ſo far forth unlawfull; and if they be according to it, then they may ſeeme needleſſe, in as much as the forme of wholeſome words contained in Scripture is ſufficient. Which reaſon againſt ſuch Platformes, makes nothing againſt Sermons or Preaching, though Sermons muſt be according to the Doctrine contained in Scripture, becauſe Preaching is an ordinance of God and therefore not needleſſe; which we cannot ſay of ſuch Platformes. Beſides, as they are not neceſſary, ſo they may be a ſnare unto men, and a dange-

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rous temptation of attending more to the forme of Doctrine delivered from the authority of the Church, and the impoſers, then to the examining thereof according to the Rule of Scripture; and ſo their faith may by this meanes ſtand in the wiſedome or will of man, rather then in the power of God, as if men had dominion over their faith; which things ought not ſo to be, 1 *Cor.*2.5 & 2.1 *ver.* Chriſtians have liberty from God to ſearch the Scriptures, and try all things, and hold faſt that which is good, *Act.*17.11. *Ioh.*5.39. 1 *Theſſ.*5.21. but the foreſaid impoſing of platformes and confeſsions compiled by men, doth ſeeme to abridge them of that liberty; and if it be any meanes of unity, yet it may be a dangerous hinderance of ſome verity and degree of truth as binding men to reſt in their former apprehenſions and knowledge, without liberty to better their judgement in thoſe points, and ſhutting the doore againſt any further light which God may give to his beſt ſervants, and moſt diſcerning, beyond what they ſaw at firſt: And therefore we doubt ſuch impoſed platformes are not lawfull, or at leaſt wiſe not expedient.

The conſociation of Churches into *Claſſes* and Synods we hold to be lawfull and in ſome caſes neceſſary; as namely in things that are not peculiar to one Church, but common to them all: And likewiſe when a Church is not able to end any matter that concernes onely themſelves, then they are to ſeeke for counſell and advice from neighbour Churches; as the Church at *Antioch* did ſend unto the Church at *Ieruſalem*, *Acts* 15. 2. the ground and uſe of *Claſſes* and Synods, with the limitations therein to be obſerved, is ſummarily laid downe by Doctor *Ames*, *Medul. Theol.l* 1.*c*.39.*Sect*.27. unto whom we do wholly conſent in this matter.

But when you ſpeake of doing no weighty matter without the conſent and counſell of a *Claſſes*, we dare not ſo far reſtraine the particular Churches as fearing this would be to give the *Claſſes* an undue power and more then belongs unto them by the Word; as being alſo an abridgment of that power which Chriſt hath given to every particular Church, to tranſact their owne matters (whether more or leſſe

leſſe weighty) among themſelves (if ſo be they be able) without ſuch neceſſary dependence upon *Claſſes*, as we have ſhewed before in anſwer to *Q.*14.*Sect.*3.*&*4. of that Anſwere. And Maſter *Parker* teſtifieth that in *Genevah*, and in the *Low-countries*, where they have ſome uſe of *Claſſes*, yet it cannot bee ſaid that their particular Congregations are *abſque poteſtate omni in rebus grandioribus, ut in excommunicatione*; the particular Churches are not without power in the more weighty matters, as in Excommunication, *Polit. Eccleſ.li.*2.*c.*36. *Sect.*11.*p.*310. And Maſter *Baine* ſheweth the ſame, ſaying, They have power of governing themſelves, but for greater edification voluntarily confederate, not to uſe or exerciſe their power but with mutuall communion, one asking the counſell and conſent of the other, *Dioceſ.Triall Q.*1.*p.*21. And a little after *Geneva* made his conſociation, not as if the prime Churches were imperfect, and to make one Church by this union; but becauſe though they were intire Churches, and had the power of Churches, yet they needed ſupport in exerciſing of it, *&c.* which is the very ſame that wee ſaid before in *Q.*14 *viz.* That all Churches have right of Government within themſelves, but ſome had need of counſell and advice of others, becauſe they are of leſſe ability to tranſact their owne matters of themſelves. And Maſter *Parker* in the ſame place afore alledged in the page immediately precedent, clearly ſheweth againſt Doctor *Downham*, Doctor *Sutcliffe*, and others, that thoſe particular Congregations which have Presbyters of their owne, with power within themſelves, are the moſt perfect, and are preciſely formed *juxta formam illam quæ in verbo pateſacta eſt*, according to that forme which is revealed in the Word; whereas others which have not the like are more defective and imperfect. And if this be ſo, then to binde Churches to do no weighty matters without the counſell and conſent of *Claſſes*, were to binde them to bee imperfect. And for Synods, if they have ſuch power that their determination ſhall binde the Churches to obedience (as you ſpeake) it is more then we yet underſtand. Indeed *Bellarmine* makes Biſhops in a Councell or Synod to be Judges; and that *ſtandum ſit eorum*

rum ſententiæ, quia ipſi ſic ſtatuerunt, quemodo ſtatur ſententiæ Prætoris in cauſis politicis; that is, either to obey or ſuffer: *de Concil. & Eccleſ. l. 1. c. 18.* But the Orthodoxe Writers do not conſent to him therein; for in their judgement the ſentence of a Councell or Synod is onely *inquiſitio quædam & dictio ſententiæ miniſtratoriæ & limitata, ita ut tantum valeat decretum Concilii quantum valeat ejus ratio*, as Doctor *Ames* hath it in his *Bellarminus enervatus*, upon that place of *Bellarmine*: that is, The ſentence of a Synod is onely a certaine enquiring and giving of ſentence by way of Miniſtery, and with limitation; ſo that the decree of the Councell hath ſo much force as there is force in the reaſon of it. And *Junius* expreſſeth it thus; *Sententia Concilii per ſe ipſam ſuaſionis non coactionis eſt judicium miniſteriale, non authoritatem, per ſe neceſſitatemque adferens, Animadverſ.* upon *Bellarmine* in that place: that is, The ſentence of a Councell is of it ſelfe onely of advice, not of compulſion or conſtraint, and brings with it a judgement miniſteriall, not authority of it ſelfe nor neceſsity; whereunto we doe wholly conſent. As for that clauſe in this Queſtion, *That the determination of a Synod ſhould binde if not to obedience, yet to peaceable ſuffering*, we know not what ſufferings thoſe ſhould be: for puniſhments in Purſe or Perſon, in reſpect of the body or outward man, are not to be inflicted by Synods, but by civill Magiſtrates; and Church-cenſures of Excommunication, or the like, belong to the particular Church of which an offendor is a member, out of the communion whereof a man cannot be caſt, but onely by his owne Church.

To 19. Onely Chriſt hath Authority to make Lawes for the government of each particular Church, and the Members thereof, and his lawes doe oblige all the Members, and may not be omitted without ſinne, *Jam. 4. 12. Iſa. 33. 22. Mat. 23. 8, 9 10. Act. 3. 23.* But for particular Churches, they have no power to make Lawes for themſelves or their Members, but to obſerve and ſee all their Members obſerve thoſe Laws which Chriſt hath given and commanded *Mat. 28. 20. Deut. 33. 3. Iohn 10. 27.* If any Church ſhall preſume further, they goe beyond their Commiſsion, and in ſuch

such case their Ecclesiasticall Lawes may be omitted without sinne, nay it would be sinne to be subject to them *Col.* 2. 20. To walke after them, *Hos.* 5. 11. to be such servants of men as not to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, 1 *Cor.* 7. 23. *Gal.* 5. 1.

The outward calling of a Minister consisteth properly and essentially in election by the people, as Doctor *Ames* sheweth, *Cas. Cons. l.* 4. *c.* 25. *Q.* 6. And this election is so essentiall, that without it the Ministers calling (if you speak of an ordinary Church officer) is a nullity; And therefore *Mornay*, that learned noble man of *France*, approveth that saying of *Chrysostome*, election by the people is so necessary, as that without it there is neither Altar, nor Church, nor Priest-hood, where (omitting other things) it appeares to be their judgement, that without election by the people, the Ministery is void; And *Mornay* addeth of his owne, concerning the Bishops amongst the Papists, that they were *nullâ planè* χειροτονία, *nulla proinde*, χειροθεσία, for the one presupposed the other, no Imposition, seeing without election, in his booke of the Church, *c.* 11. *p.* 375. Yet sometimes the peoples acceptance and approbation afterward may supply the want of election at the first, as *Iacobs* after consent and acceptance of *Lea*, made her to be his wife, though hee chose her not at the first. And by this we hold the calling of many Ministers in *England* may be excused, who at first came into their places without the consent of the people. *To* 20.

If ordination by imposition of hands, were of the essence of a Ministers calling then in those Churches, where such ordination is not used, their Ministers should want a lawfull calling, which were an hard sentence against many Ministers in *Scotland*, where (as is reported) this ordination is not thought necessary, and therefore used or omitted indifferently. Wee looke at Ordination by Imposition of hands, as a solemne investing of men in o their places, whereto they have right and calling by election, like to the inauguration of a Magistrate in the Commonwealth, yet necessary by divine Institution. 1 *Tim.* 4. 14. But not so necessary as if the Ministers calling were a nullity without

it. *Essentia ipsa vocationis, in electione legitima consistit; Ordinatio pendet ab electione, sicut Coronatio Principis, aut Magistratus inauguratio, ab electione, successione, aut aquivalente aliqua constitutione. Ames Bellarm. enervat. Lib. 3. de clericis, c. 2. Sect. 3.* That is, the essence of a Ministers calling consists in lawfull election, Ordination depends upon Election, as the Coronation of a Prince, or the Inauguration of a Magistrate, depends upon Election, Succession, or some other Constitution æquivalent. And againe, *Ritus impositionis manuum non est absolute necessarius ad esse Pastoris, non magis quam Coronatio ad esse Regis, aut celebratio nuptiarum ad earum esse. sect.* 10. That is, the right of Imposition of hands is not absolutely necessary to the essence of a Pastor, no more then the Coronation to the essence of a King, or the Celebration of Marriage to the essence thereof.

To 21. Ordination of Ministers is not a private action but publique, and ought to be done publiquely in the Assembly of the Church, and therefore the persons that performe it, (whether they be ordinary Church Officers or no) cannot in any congruity of speech be called meere private persons in that Action.

2. The Church that hath no Officers, may elect Officers or Ministers unto themselves, therefore it may also ordaine them; which Argument Dr. *Whitaker* useth as wee shall see anon. If it have Commission and power from Christ for the one, and that the greater, it hath it also for the other which is the lesser: Now ordination is lesse then election, and depends upon it as a necessary Antecedent by divine Institution, by vertue of which it is justly administred, being indeed nothing else but the admission of a person lawfully elected into his Office, or a putting of him into possession thereof whereunto he had right before by election, as was said before in answer to the precedent Question.

3. If a Church have Ministers or Elders before, then this ordination is to be performed by the Elders of the Church, and in their Assemblie, 1 *Tim.* 4. 14. as also many other acts are to be performed by them.

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4. This Ordination thus performed by the Elders for the Church, may fitly be called the Act of the whole Church, as it is the whole man that ſeeth, that heareth, that ſpeaketh, when theſe acts are inſtrumentally performed by the eye, the eare, and the tongue, in which ſenſe Maſter *Parker* ſaith, *Eccleſia per alios docet, baptiſatque, Polit. Eccleſ. l. 3. c. 7. p. 26.*

5. But when a Church hath no Officers, but the firſt Officers themſelves are to be ordained, then this Ordination by the Rite of impoſing of hands may be performed for the Church by the moſt prime, grave and able men from among themſelves, as the Church ſhall depute hereunto, as the children of *Iſrael* did lay their hands upon the *Levites*, *Numb.* 8. 10. Now all the Congregation could not impoſe all their hands upon them together, all their hands could not poſsibly reach them together, and therefore it muſt needs be that ſome of the Congregation in the name of the whole body performed this Rite: And as this Scripture ſheweth, that the people may in ſome caſes lay their hands upon Church Officers, (for the *Levites* were ſuch, upon whom the children of *Iſrael* did lay their hands) ſo let it be conſidered, whether theſe reaſons doe not further make it manifeſt.

1. Men that are in no Office may elect, therefore they may ordaine, becauſe ordination is nothing elſe but the execution of Election.

2. If it were not ſo, then one of theſe would follow, either that the Officers muſt miniſter without any Ordination at all, or elſe by vertue of ſome former Ordination received in ſome other Church, or elſe they muſt be ordained by ſome other Miniſter or Miniſters of ſome other Church, that were ordained afore them, and ſo the Miniſtery to be by ſucceſsion. But the firſt of theſe is againſt the Scripture, 1 *Tim.* 4. 14. *Heb.* 6. 2. And the ſecond were to eſtabliſh the Popiſh opinion of the indeleble Character, imprinted as they imagine in their Sacrament of holy Orders. Whereas for ought we can diſcerne, if when they are called to Office in any Church, they have need of a new Election, notwithſtanding their former election into another Church

then they have by the same ground need of a new Ordination, for Ordination depends upon Election: If their former Election be ceased, their former Ordination is ceased also; and they can no more minister by vertue of a former *Ordination* unto another *Church*, then by vertue of a former Election. And for the third, we doe not understand what authority ordinary Officers can have to ordaine Ministers to such a Church, of which themselves are not so much as Members. Besides, at some times, namely at the first Reformation after the times of Popery, there were no others to be had but from the Pope, and his Bishops and Priests. Now it were a pittifull case, if the Sheep must have no Shepherd but such as are appointed to them by the wolves, That is, if Gods people might not have Ministers, but onely from the popish Bishops. This were to say, either that the Ministers of Antichrist, must, or may ordaine Ministers to the Church of Christ, or else that the popish Bishops are true Ministers of Christ. And if Protestants thinke it necessary, that their first Ministers should be ordained by the popish Bishops, it is no marvell if the Papists do thereupon believe that their Church is the true Church, and their Bishops true Ministers. Such a scandall is it unto them to maintaine this personall succession of the Ministery. But God doth so much abhorre *Antichrist*, that hee would not have his people to seek to him, nor his Priests to ordaine Christs Ministers, as he would not take of *Babilon* a stone for a Corner, nor a stone for a foundation, *Ier.* 51.26.

3. It is thus in civill Corporations and Cities, the Major, Bayliffe, or other chiefe Officer elect, is at his entrance and inauguration to receive at the hands of his Predecessors the Sword or Keyes of the City, or to have some other solemne Ceremonie by him performed unto him, yet if either there be no former as at the first or that the former be dead or upon necessity absent, when his Successor entreth, then is this Ceremony and worke performed by some other, the fittest Instrument; neither need that City borrow any Officer of another City, neither could he entermeddle there without usurpation, though both the Corporations have the same Charter under the same King. And so it is in this spiritual

ſpirituall Corporation or City, the Church of God.

4. That this point may ſeeme the leſſe ſtrange to you, we pray you conſider with us a little further the nature of this Ordination, and then wee will adde the Teſtimonies of ſome eminent Proteſtant Writers in this caſe, that you may ſee this is not any ſingular opinion of ours. For the former, ſome indeed have ſo highly advanced this Ordination, that they have preferred it farre above preaching the Word, miniſtring the Sacraments, and Prayer, making it and the power of Excommunication, the two incommunicable Prerogatives of a Biſhop above an ordianary Miniſter; yet the Scripture teacheth no ſuch thing, but rather the contrary, for when the Apoſtles were ſent out by Chriſt, there was no mention of Ordination in that Commiſsion of theirs, but only of teaching & preaching & baptiſing *Mat.* 28. 19, 20. *Mark.* 16. 15, 16. If Ordination of Miniſters had bin ſuch a ſpeciall worke, there would belike have bin ſome mention of it in their Commiſsion. And certaine it is, the Apoſtles counted preaching the Word their principall worke, and after it Prayer, and the miniſtring of the Sacraments, *Act.* 6. 4. 1 *Cor.* 1. 17. If ordaining of Miniſters had bin in their account ſo prime a worke, it may ſeem *Paul* would rather have tarried in *Creete* to have ordained Elders there, then have gone himſelfe about preaching, leaving *Titus* for the other, *Tit.* 1 5. By all which it appeares, that ordaining of Miniſters is not ſuch an eminent work as that it is to be preferred above preaching the Word, and miniſtring the Sacraments, and therefore to be performed by them that are ſuperiours unto ordinary Miniſters; preaching and miniſtring the Sacraments, being left as inferiour workes unto Miniſters, of an inferiour ranke, as they would have it, that ſtand for the ſuperiority of Doceſan Biſhops; neither is it equall unto thoſe other workes afore mentioned, that onely he that doth thoſe, may performe this other alſo, as ſome others thinke; but being nothing elſe in the true nature and uſe of it but the execution and accompliſhment and confirmation of election, it may bee performed by the people of God, that yet have no Officers, even as Election may upon which it doth depend.

5. Laſtly,

5. Lastly, let these sayings of some Protestant Writers of singular note, either for holinesse, or learning, or both, be well considered of. Master *Perkins* saith, Succession of Doctrine alone is sufficient; for this Rule must bee remembred, that the power of the Keyes (that is, of order and jurisdiction) is tyed by God and annexed in the New Testament to Doctrine. If in *Turkey*, or *America*, or elsewhere, the Gospel should be received by the counsell and perswasion of private persons, they need not send into *Europe* for consecrated Ministers, but they have power to choose their owne Ministers from within themselves; because where God gives the Word he gives the power also; *upon Gal* 1.11. Doctor *Willet* saith, Whereas *Bellarmine* objecteth that as in the old Law the Priesthood went by carnall generation and lineall descent from *Aaron*, so in the New it must bee derived by succession from the Apostles; we answere, first, that our Saviour Christ and his Apostles could shew no lineall descent from *Aaron*, neither had their ordination from his Successors, and yet were the true Pastors of the Church. And a little after, This we say further, that both before Christ there were true Pastors and Prophets, which were not ordained by the Priests of *Aaron*; and since Christ, that received not their ordination successively from the Apostles. First, in the old Law, when the ordinary Priesthood was corrupted, God raised up Prophets from other Tribes that received not from the Priests their ordination and allowance: such an one was *Amos*, who was among Heardsmen, and was made a Prophet as he was gathering wilde black-berries. After the same manner in the corrupt times of the Gospel, the Lord hath raised up faithfull Ministers to his Church, that could shew no succession from the degenerate Clergy. And a little after, If *Paul* were made an Apostle without the ordination of the lawfull Apostles much more may the Lord raise up new Pastors to his Church without ordination from the usurpers of the Apostles: *Synops. Papism. contr.* 2. *Q.* 3. *of Succession Error* 20. *p.*81. *Morney* his words are full and plaine to the same purpose, *viz.* Although some of our men in such a corrupt state of the Church, as we have seene in our time, without waiting

ing for calling or allowance of them who under the title of Pastors oppressed the Lords Flock, did at first preach without this formall calling, and afterward were chosen and called to the holy Ministey by the Churches which they had taught; yet this ought to seeme no more strange, then if in a free common-wealth the people without waiting either for the consent, or for the voices of those that tyrannize over them, should (according to the Lawes) make choice of good and wise Magistrates, such (happily) as God would serve his turne of for their deliverance, and for the publike restitution. And hereof wee have examples, first, in the *Acts*, where wee read that *Philip*, who was but a Deacon, preacheth in *Samaria* without the calling of the Apostles, yea without their privity, who for all that gave their allowance to his worke. In *Frumentius*, carried upon another occasion into the *Indies*, a meere Lay-man, who yet there preacheth the Gospel, and a good while after is there made Bishop. In those of whom *Origen* speaketh, that shall come by chance into a City where never any Christian was borne, shall there begin to teach, and labour to instruct the people in the Faith, whom the People shall afterward make their Pastors and Bishops: and besides, in all the Scriptures there is not one place that bindeth the Ministery of the Gospel to a certaine succession; but contrariwise the Scripture sheweth, that God would send two speciall witnesses to prophesie against Antichrist: *Of the Church chap.* 11. *p.*371. Doctor *Whitaker* answering *Bellarmine*, that would prove Protestants to have no Church, because their Ministers had no Ordination by Bishops, saith, That as sometimes Bishops were chosen by the Clergy and sometimes by the People, so the same may be said of Ordination, *viz.* that it was sometimes by the Clergy, and sometimes by the People; and then addeth, *Quod si vocationem eorum Episcoporum legitimam fuisse concedat Bellarminus, De ordinatione minus laboramus. Qui enim habent authoritatem vocandi, iidem etiam authoritatem ordinandi habent, si legitima ordinatio non possit impetrari: nam ordinatio sequitur vocationem; qui vocatur, is quasi in sui muneris possessionem mittitur*: de Eccles. Q. 5. cap. 6 p. 510. Finally, Doctor *Ames* doth also witnesse

the same in many places of his workes: for a taste take these few sayings of his in this case, *viz. Ad totam Ecclesiam semper pertinet ordinatio, quoad jus, vim, virtutem illam quam habet in Ministro Ecclesiæ constituendo; sicut celebratio matrimonii vim aut virtutem omnem acceptam refert legitimo consensui conjugum: Ecclesiæ statu (ministerio & ordine deficiente) collapso vel corrupto, à plebe etiam actus iste ordinationis, quatenus necessarius est ad Ministri constitutionem in tali casu, potest legitimè exerceri,* Bellarm. enervat. lib. 3. de clericis, cap. 2 de ordinatione. And againe, a little after; *Episcopos veros à veris Episcopis ordinariè dicimus ordinandos esse, sed nomine Ecclesiæ cui ordinantur.* And againe, a little after, *Potestas ordinandi est aliquo modo originaliter in tota Ecclesia, sicut potestas videndi originaliter est in toto animali, quamvis formaliter & subjectivè sit in oculo tantùm; tum etiam ordinationis exercitium pendet à tota Ecclesia, sicut actus videndi hoc vel illud determinatè pendet non ab oculo sed à toto.* And againe, *Quamvis in Ecclesia benè constituta non debeat aliis quam presbyteris ordinandi manus mandari; in defectu tamen idoneorum presbyterorum potest non presbyteris mandari.* And yet againe in the next place, *Si concedatur hoc, quòd ex ordine nemo possit esse legitimus pastor, nisi sit à legitimo Pastore & Episcopo ordinatus: In ordinis tamen defectu, cùm jam primò instaurari debet ordo, non potest tam accuratè observari, atque adeo extraordinarium aliquid tum potest intervenire sine ullo vitio.* These words you see are punctuall and plaine, that the power of ordaining Ministers is originally in the Church; and that though when a Church hath Presbyters, the act of ordaining is to be done by those Presbyters; yet in defect of such it may be performed by them that are no Presbyters, lawfully, and without fault; which is the case of our Churches that are in their beginnings, and may be the case of any Church when they come to be without Officers, as by warre, pestilence, &c. it may come to passe.

To. 22. There are some things common to Pastors with Teachers: as, that they are both Officers of the Church appointed by Christ; both Elders or Bishops to rule and feed the Church, by labouring in the Word and Doctrine, *Act.* 20 28. 1 *Tim.* 3. 1. *Tit.* 1. 5, 7. and therefore the name of Pastour, in a generall sense may be given to them both, *Ier.* 3. 15.

3.15. as also the name of Teacher, *Isa.*30.20. as those names may also be given to Apostles, in as much as they also are Elders, Pastors, Teachers, to rule, to feed, to teach the Church of God, 1 *Pet.*5.1. *Ioh.*21.15.16. 1 *Tim.*2.7. & 2.1.11. And if Pastors and Teachers be both of them Church officers, to feed and rule the Church, by labouring in the Word and Doctrine, they must not do this without application of it to the consciences and states of the hearers, as God shall helpe them : for this application is one part of his worke, that is by his office to preach the Word, without which the Word is not handled in such a manner as it ought to be, 2 *Tim.*2.15. 1 *Cor.*14.25. *Luk.*12.42. and many hearers need this, the Word delivered in generall without application of it being to them as bread set before children in the whole loafe. And if both of them must labour in the Word and Doctrine, and not onely in a generall way, but with application, we see not but they may both of them administer the Seales or Sacraments, wherein there is a speciall application of the promises of the Gospel, and the grace of Christ therein, unto the faithfull and believing receivers.

2. And yet for all this community between them, they are not in propriety of speech the same Officers, but distinct, and so the Scripture speaketh of them *Ephes.*4.11. For if a man would say their Offices are confounded, because the same generall worke of preaching the Word, and applying the same, belongs unto them both : By the same reason a man might say the offices of Apostles and Evangelists were confounded ; for both of them were to preach the Word, with application of the same by doctrine, and Seales ; and also that the ordinary Pastors were the same office with them both, because hee also is to doe the same worke of preaching and applying : But an Apostle is to feed, and rule, and teach, by way of Doctrine and Application, as an Apostle ; an Evangelist as an Evangelist, and an ordinary Pastor as an ordinary Pastor, and therein lyes the difference : and wee may adde, a Teacher as a Teacher ; and therein is he distinguished both from the Pastor, and from all other Church Officers, even as by the same they all are distinguished one from another, the same generall worke

of Doctrine and Application being common to them all.

3. And for the Teacher and Pastor, the difference between them lyes in this, that the one is principally to attend upon points of Knowledge and Doctrine, though not without Application; and the other to points of Practice, though not without Doctrine: and therefore the one of them is called, *He that teacheth*, and his worke is thus expressed, *let him attend on teaching*; and the other, *He that exhorteth*, and his worke, *to attend on exhortation*, *Rom.*12.7,8. and the gift of the one is called *a word of knowledge*, and the gift of the other, *a word of wisedome*, 1 *Cor.*12.8. as experience also sheweth, that one mans gift is more doctrinall, and for points of knowledge; and anothers more exhortatory, and for points of practise.

To 23. It is not the manner of Elders among us, whether Ruling onely, or Ruling and Teaching also, to strive for authority or preheminence one above another; as remembring what lesson our Saviour taught his Disciples, when they were at strife among them, which of them should be the greatest, *Luk.*22.24,25.*&c.* If *Diotrephes* strive for preheminence 3 *Ioh.*9,10. verily we abhorre such striving, and by the grace of God respect one another as Brethren. As for the peoples duty toward their Elders, it is taught them plainly in that place, 1 *Thes.* 5. 12, 13. as also in that of 1 *Tim.*5.17. *Let the Elders that rule well bee counted worthy of double honour, specially they that labour in the Word and Doctrine*; and this Word (*specially*) shewes them, that as they are to account all their *Elders worthy of double honour*, so in speciall manner their Teaching or Preaching Elders.

To 24. & 25. These are answered in that which was sent the last yeare.

To 26. We doe believe that every Minister of the Gospel ought to be maintained with sufficient and honourable maintenance, according to his need and occasions, in regard of his person, calling, charge of children and hospitality, so as he that preacheth the Gospel may in all these respects live of

of the Goſpel, 1 *Cor.*9.14. *Gal* 6.6. 1 *Tim.*5.17. And this maintenance is not to be allowed as almes and courteſie, but as debt and duty, to bee paid according to the rule of Juſtice; the Labourer is worthy of his wages, *Luk.* 10.17. which the Apoſtle ſheweth to be according to all Lawes of nature, nations, *Moſes* and Chriſt, 1 *Cor.*9. But for ſetled and ſtinted maintenance, there is nothing done that way amongſt us, except from yeare to yeare, becauſe the conditions of Miniſters may vary, and of the Church to which they doe belong: Neither doe we know any ſuch thing to be appointed by Chriſt our Lord, for the maintenance of the Miniſtery in theſe dayes; but this we know, that the great mountaine burning with fire, caſt into the ſea upon the ſounding of the ſecond Trumpet *Rev.*8.8,9. is applyed by ſome good Writers to thoſe times, when *Conſtantine* brought ſetled endowments into the Church, with *ampla prædia* (as they are called) are counted by ſome to bee no better then poyſon to the Church; as the Stories ſay that upon the fact of the good Emperour a voice was heard, which ſaid, *Hodie ſeminatum eſt virus in Eccleſiam.* And if thoſe Writers be not deceived which ſo expound that Scripture (as for our parts wee know not but they expound it truely) then in as much as upon the caſting of that mountaine into the ſea, a third part of it became blood and a third part of living creatures dyed, and a third part of ſhips were deſtroyed, it may be truely gathered thence that the bringing in of ſetled endowments and eminent preferments into the Church, hath been the corruption, and to ſome the deſtruction of ſuch as lived by them, both Church-officers and Church-members.

We doe not permit, and call upon (ſuch whom you call) meere Lay men, and private perſons, neither being in the Miniſtery nor intended to it, ordinarily to preach or prophecy publiquely, in or before the Congregation, if by ordinarily, you meane frequently and uſually. For where ordinary Officers are not wanting to a Church, and neither detained from their worke by ſickneſſe, nor juſt abſence, we thinke it moſt meet to offer our Sacrifice to God and to the *To* 27.

Church of our best gifts. But yet if you oppose ordinary to extraordinary, we doe confesse that some private members(to wit such as are eminently fitted with knowledge and utterance, being also men of humble spirits, and holy lives, all which qualifications we finde but in a few) may without an extraordinary calling from God be called forth by by the Church upon some occasion (and namely in the absence or bodily weakenesse of Ministers, or for tryall of gifts when a man intends the Ministery) to speake to edification, exhortation and comfort. *Iehosaphat* sent Princes (who neither were Ministers,nor intended so to be)to teach with the Priests and Levites , to wit, at least to incourage the people, to hearken to the Priests and Levites come amongst them, 2 *Chron.* 17. 7,8,9. As *Iehosaphat* himselfe also did the like, 2 *Chron.*20.20. Yea,and was their mouth also to God in prayer,*v.*2.5. to 13. As for that prophecying 1 *Cor.* 14.We conceive as some things in it be extraordinary , so some things ordinary. Extraordinary,that private men,and new converts should be so soon & so suddainly, & so much enlightened & enlarged,as to be able to prophecy publikely tothe edification of a whole Church:But yet this we conceive to be ordinary, that some private men may be found (at least in some Churches) grown Christians, of able gifts, who may have received a gift of Prophecy,and for such we doe not thinke it requireth any more an extraordinary calling for them to prophecy in our Churches,then for *Iehosaphat* and his Princes to prophecy in the Church of *Israel.*

To 28. Our Answer to this Question is that we never knew any Ministers that did call upon the people thus to doe: and as for us, such calling upon them is farre from us. All that we know to be holden in this case is this , that some thinke the people have a liberty to aske a Question publiquely for their better satisfaction upon very urgent and weighty cause , though even this is doubted of by others , and all judge the ordinary practice of it, not necessary: but (if it be not meekly and wisely carried) to be inconvenient,if not utterly unlawfull , and therefore such asking of Questions is seldome used in ary Church among us , and in most Churches never. True it is , in the times a little afore the Synod divers that were infected with corrupt opinions were

were very bold, & forward in this kind of asking Queſtions, after *Sermons*, eſpecially when they had heard ſomthing delivered publiquely that did make againſt their Tenents; by which kind of asking Queſtions, they plainely diſcovered of what ſpirit they were, but for being called upon by us thus to doe, (as it ſeems to your Queſtion that you have been informed) the truth is, there was no ſuch matter. But now theſe men are long ſince, (the greateſt part of them) to an Iſland (called *Aqueaneck*) departed from amongſt us, ſome of them being excommunicated or baniſhed, or both, & others departing voluntarily, or for feare of the like cenſure, by meanes of which departure of theſe troubleſome ſpirits from amongſt us, and the bleſsing of God upon the Synod & Sermons that have laid open & reproved this diſorderly asking of Queſtions, a man may now live from one end of the year unto another in theſe Congregations, & not hear any man open his mouth in ſuch kind of asking Queſtions.

1. The converſion of ſinners unto God doth not alwaies follow the preaching of every one, that is in a lawfull office of miniſtery, as experience and Scripture doe aboundantly witneſſe, *Iſay.* 49. 4,5. & 53. 1. *Ezech.* 3. 7. 2 *King.* 17. 13 14. *Mat.* 11. 20,21. &c. *Iohn* 12. 37. *To* 29.

2. And when it doth follow, it is not by vertue of him, or of his office, but by vertue of Gods bleſsing, and the mighty operation of his ſpirit as he pleaſeth, without which the Miniſter and his office could have had no vertue at all to convert ſinners unto God, 1 *Cor.* 3. 6. no more then *Peter* and *Iohn* could heale the lame man, by virtue of any power or holineſſe that was in them, *Act.* 3. 12. For otherwiſe faithfull Miniſters ſhould not have their labours bleſſed for converſion ſome more and ſome leſſe. but all in the ſame meaſure, inaſmuch as one of them is no more a Miniſter then another, nor no more in Office then another, their office being the ſame, the effect in converſion would bee the ſame if converſion were by the vertue of their office. The truth it is, the Law of the Lord, (the whole Word of God) that converts the ſoule, *Pſal.* 19. 7. And the Goſpell that is the power of God unto Salvation. *Rom.* 1. 16. And therefore the converſion of a man to God is to be aſcribed to God, and to the Word of his Grace, and not to the Miniſter, nor any vertue of his office.

3. But

3. But this we doe acknowledge, that the ſound converſion of ſinners, whenſoever ſuch a thing comes to paſſe, doth argue that the Inſtruments of ſuch converſion are ſent of God: God would not ſo have bleſſed them, as to convert any by them, if himſelfe had not ſent them at all, *Rom.* 10. 14, 15. *Ier.* 23. 32.

4. And yet we dare not ſay, that Gods Word is not made effectuall to converſion, unleſſe the man that ſpeakes it be a Miniſter, that is to ſay, a Church Officer, for the contrary is evident from the Scripture, *John* 4. 39. *Act.* 8. 4. with 11. 19, 20, 21. 1 *Cor.* 7. 16. They that were ſcattered abroad upon the perſecution that aroſe about *Steven*, were not Church Officers, at leaſt all of them (for the Apoſtles who were their chiefe, if not their only preaching Officers, were not ſcattered abroad upon that perſecution, but remained ſtill at *Jeruſalem*, Acts 8. 1.) and yet theſe men did ſo preach the Word of the Lord Jeſus to the *Iewes* and the *Grecians*, that through the good hand of the Lord that was with them, a great number believed and turned to the Lord; And the ſame we ſay of the woman of *Samaria*, by whoſe Teſtimonie of Chriſt many of the *Samaritans* believed on him. To reſtraine the efficacy of Gods Word in ſuch ſort as to ſay that none can be converted by it, unleſſe he that ſpeakes it be a Miniſter, is to limit the ſpirit of the Lord, where he hath not limited himſelf, who is free in working by whom he pleaſeth, and as he will, 1 *Cor.* 12. 11. Even as the wind bloweth where it liſteth, *Iohn* 3. 8. and ſometimes doth bring to paſſe great things by weake meanes, that his owne glory may be the more, 1 *Cor.* 1. 27, 28, 29. If any ſay, how can theſe things ſtand together, that a man that is no Miniſter may be an Inſtrument of converſion, and yet converſion of ſinners argues that the man is ſent of God? Wee anſwer, that we muſt diſtinguiſh of ſending according to the divers degrees thereof. For ſometimes it imports no more but ſuch an Act of Gods diſpoſing providence, whereby men are gifted and enabled for ſuch or ſuch a worke, and permitted thereunto, though they have no command from him for the doing thereof, nor doe it not with a ſincere minde in any obedience to God, but for corrupt and ſiniſter

ends

ends of their owne. Thus God ſent the King of *Aſſyria* againſt the *Iewes*, Iſa. 10. 6. And bands of the *Caldees*, and bands of other Nations againſt *Jehojakim*, and againſt *Iudah*, to deſtroy it, 2 *King*. 24. 2. And yet they had no command from him to doe this, but ſinned grievouſly in ſo doing. Thus they that preached Chriſt not ſincerely, but of envie and ſtrife, to adde affliction to *Pauls* bands, yet inaſmuch as they preached Chriſt, might be ſaid to be ſent of God, and therefore the Apoſtle joyed at their preaching, *Phil.* 1. 15, 16. Thus *Baalam* in his Prophecies againſt the enemies of *Iſrael* and for the happy ſtate of Gods people, might be ſaid to be ſent of God, though his heart and ends were corrupt and ſinfull. But if men be not onely enabled with gifts for ſuch or ſuch a worke, but beſides this, have a ſincere minde and deſire in the uſing thereof, to ſeeke the glory of God, and the good of ſoules, ſuch men may much more be ſaid to be ſent of God, *Iohn* 7. 18. For theſe men have not onely abilities and gifts from God, and permiſsion to imploy them as the former had but alſo his ſpirit within them, which doth ſet their hearts on right and holy ends, which the other wanted. And yet if men doe want a lawfull office of Miniſtery, wherein to exerciſe thoſe gifts or a lawfull calling to that office or exerciſe, they may in that reſpect be ſaid not to be ſent of God, or not to be called of him though ſent of him, in the firſt or ſecond reſpect. Thus in the Scriptures it is ſaid of ſome they ran and I ſent them not, *Ier.* 23. 21. I perceived that God had not ſent him, but he pronounced his Prophecies, becauſe *Sanballat* and *Tobiah* had hired him, *Neh.* 6. 12. And yet doubtleſſe in reſpect of Gods diſpoſing providence, he had ſent them, as the Scripture witneſſeth, that God ſends ſtrong deluſions and lying Prophets, and unfaithfull Shepherds, 2 *Theſ.* 2. 11. 1 *King.* 22. 22, 23. *Zech.* 11. 16. to be a plague unto the Sons of men, and for tryall to his ſervants, *Deut.* 13. 3. 1 *Cor.* 11. 19. Now let theſe diſtinctions be applyed to the caſe in hand, and we may perceive how, if a man convert ſinners, certainly God ſends him; and yet ſome that are not called to any office in the Miniſtery, may through his bleſsing convert ſinners: A man converts none unleſſe God ſend him in the firſt or ſecond ſence and yet he may convert, and not bee ſent, if ſending be taken in the third ſence, that is for a lawfull calling into ſome office in the

Church. And wee may adde, further a man may be sent in this third sence, and yet convert none if he be not also sent in the first and second respect; that is a man may have a lawfull calling outwardly unto a lawfull office in the Church, and yet not convert sinners, if he want gifts or sincerity of heart, which might be the case of *Judas*, and of many wicked Priests in the old Testament: Yea, happily convert none though he be truly sent in all three respects, as was said before in the beginning of the Answer to this Quære. But if comparison be made, we doubt not, but whilest the Ministery remaines uncorrupt, God is wont to follow with a greater blessing, the labours of those who have gifts and an office of Ministery also, then of those who have gifts alone without office. He is willing, and wonted to honour himselfe most, where most of his wayes are observed.

To 30. Master *Parker Polit. Eccles. l. 2. c. 39. & c. 41.* observes a difference between the Substantialls in Church Politie, and the accessaries or accidentalls, and circumstantialls: And againe, that of circumstances some are generall, and some particular and individuall; and so sheweth that the Church Politie in regard of the substantialls thereof is prescribed in the Word, and therefore immutable. According to which distinction wee Answer, that if those words (precisely the same course) mentioned in this Question, be not meant of particular and individuall circumstances, but only of the substantialls or generall circumstances, then for ought we know there is no materiall point, either in constitution, or government, wherein the Churches in *N. E.* (*viz.* In the bay, in the jurisdiction of *Plymouth*, at *Connecticute*, and *Quilipiake*) do not observe the same course. (And sure it is, if they doe not they ought, because Christ hath left but one way for all Churches, and the same to be observed to the Worlds end, 1 *Tim. 6.* 13, 14.) Onely, that conformity to the Lyturgie and Ceremonies in some places, to the Northward, that Anabaptisme at *Providence*, and Familisme at *Aquidneck*, hinders that we cannot say the same of them, nor of any other in *N. E.* that concurre with them in their unwarrantable wayes, if there be any such, though thankes be to God there is none within this Jurisdiction.

To 31. Who must have liberty to sit downe in this Common-wealth and enioy the liberties thereof is not our place to determine, but the

the Magistrates who are the rulers and governours of the Common-wealth, and of all persons within the same. And as for acknowledging a company to be a sister Church, that shall set up, and practise another forme of Church Discipline, being otherwise in some measure, as you say, approveable, we conceive the companie that shall so doe, shall not be approveable therein. For the Discipline appointed by Jesus Christ for his Churches is not arbitrary, that one Church may set up and practice one forme, and another another forme, as each one shall please, but is one and the same for all Churches, and in all the Essentialls and Substantialls of it unchangable, and to be kept, till the appearing of Jesus Christ, 1 *Tim.* 6. 13,14. from which place Master *Cartwright* observes the perpetuity of Church Government taught by the Apostles, unto the end of the World, and is plain and large in this point, 1 *Rep. p.* 177. as is likewise Mr. *Parker Polit. Eccles. l.* 2. *c.* 42. and so forward to the end of that Book, unto whom we refer you herein. And if that Discipline which we here practise, be (as we are perswaded of it) the same which Christ hath appointed, and therefore unalterable, we see not how another can be lawfull; and therefore if a company of people shall come hither, and here set up and practise another, we pray you thinke not much, if we cannot promise to approve of them in so doing, especially untill wee see how approvable the men may be, and what Discipline it is that they would set up. For should wee in such generall words as is there expressed, promise to accept of a companie as a Sister Church that shall set up and practise another Discipline, and then should be taken at the utmost extent of our words, we might by this meanes be bound to accept of a company of Papists, or Arminians, or Familists, or Anabaptists, as a sister Church, for there is none of these but something may be found in them, and in their Discipline, that is in some measure approveable. And yet we pray you heartily in the Lord, so conceive of us in this passage, that we are farre from making any such comparison, as if your selves were not approved in our consciences far above the best of such men, yea and above our selves in many respects.

We have said before in that which we sent you the last yeare, and upon this occasion we say it now againe, that you are in our hearts (if the Lord would suffer) to live and dye together: and

therefore if this Question were meant of your selves, or any of you, and a company of godly people joyning with you (as it may be it is, though we cannot certainly say it, because you doe not expresse so much) we thinke if you were here, wee should gladly accept of you and your people as a sister-Church, and that you would doe the like to ours; and yet not when you should set up and practise one forme of Church-discipline, and we another; but because we are perswaded if you were here, you would set up and practise the very same that wee doe, and not any other: or else if we be swerving from the rule in any particular (as God knowes we are but weake men, and far from dreaming of perfection in this life) God would by you send in more light unto us then yet we see, and make you instruments in his hand for perfecting what is here begun according to his will, for strengthening what is weake, and reforming what may be found to be amisse: For we trust in the Lord, that as wee are desirous that you might joyne with us in the wayes wherein we now walke, (which we doe not see but they are according to the Rule) so we should be as willing to receive light from you, and to redresse (as God shall helpe us) whatsoever by you or any other he may discover to us to stand in need of Reformation. For which cause among others we doe the more earnestly desire, if it were the Lords will that he might send you hither, nothing doubting but if you were here, there would be such agreement between you and us, that either you would approve of the things which we beleeve and practise, or that we should approve of what you may shew us to be more agreeable to the minde of Christ: and then there would be no occasion of such a Question, *Whether we may set up and practise another discipline, and yet be accepted as a sister-Church:* but rather of blessing the Lord, when that shall be accomplished in you and us which is written in the Prophets, *I will give them one heart and one way: I will turne unto the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the Name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent*, Jer. 32. 39. Zeph. 3. 9. *Wee have confidence in you through the Lord, that you will be none otherwise minded*: but if in any thing ye be *otherwise minded, God shall reveale even this unto you*, Gal. 5. 10. Phil. 3. 15.

This was answered in the answer to Posit. 1. & 2. sent unto you the last yeare.

FINIS.

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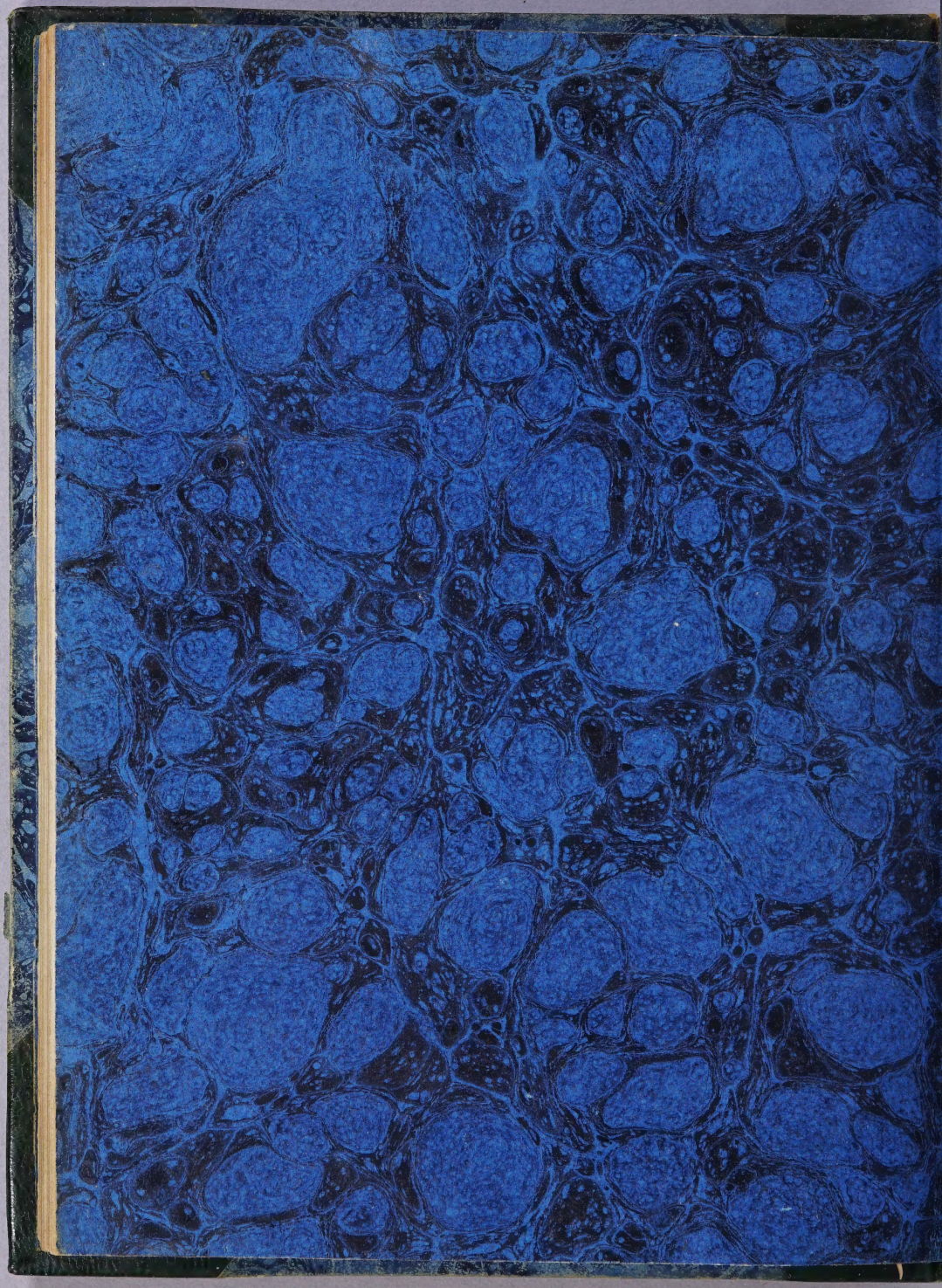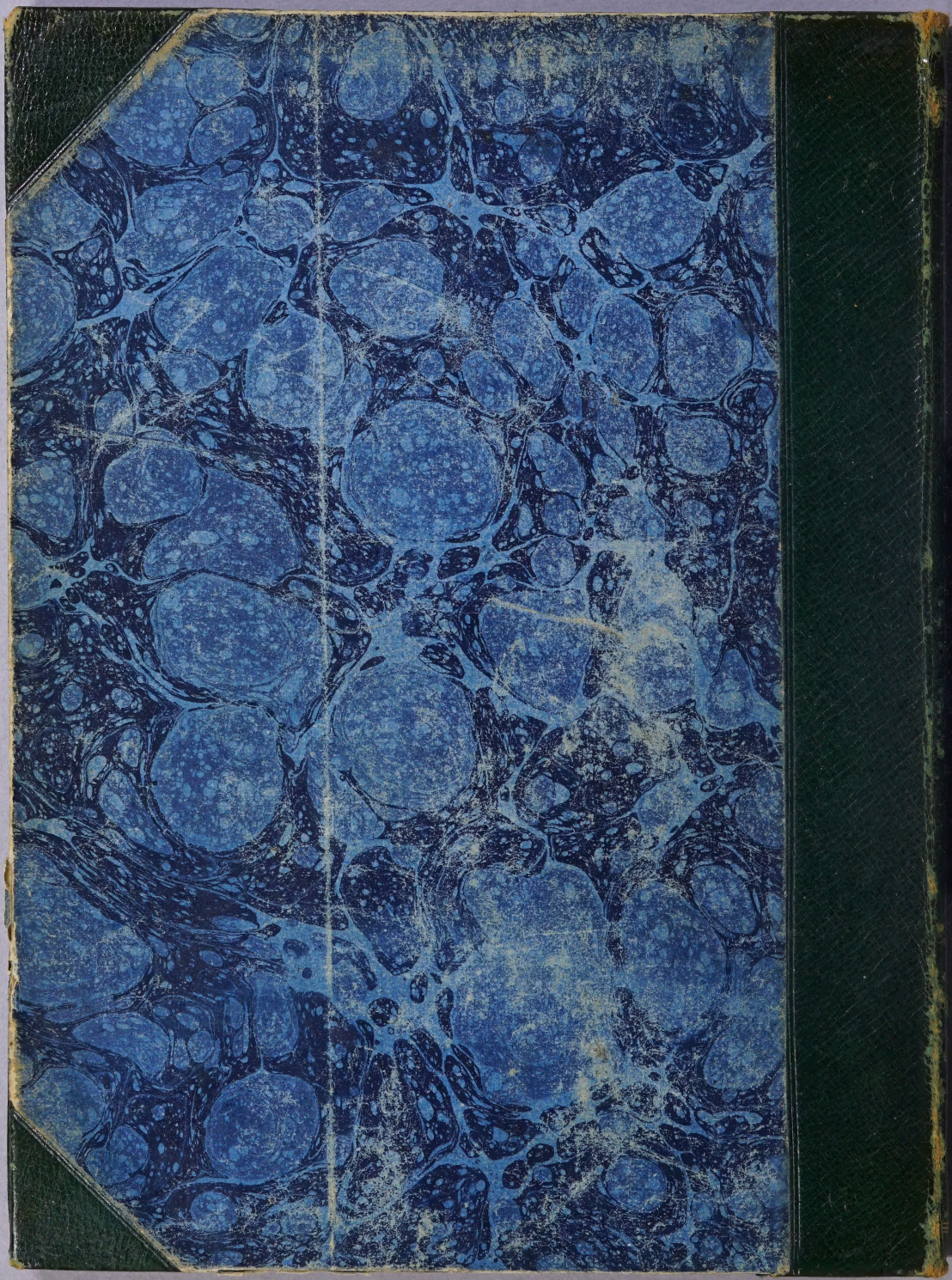
D. Math
M. 38.1